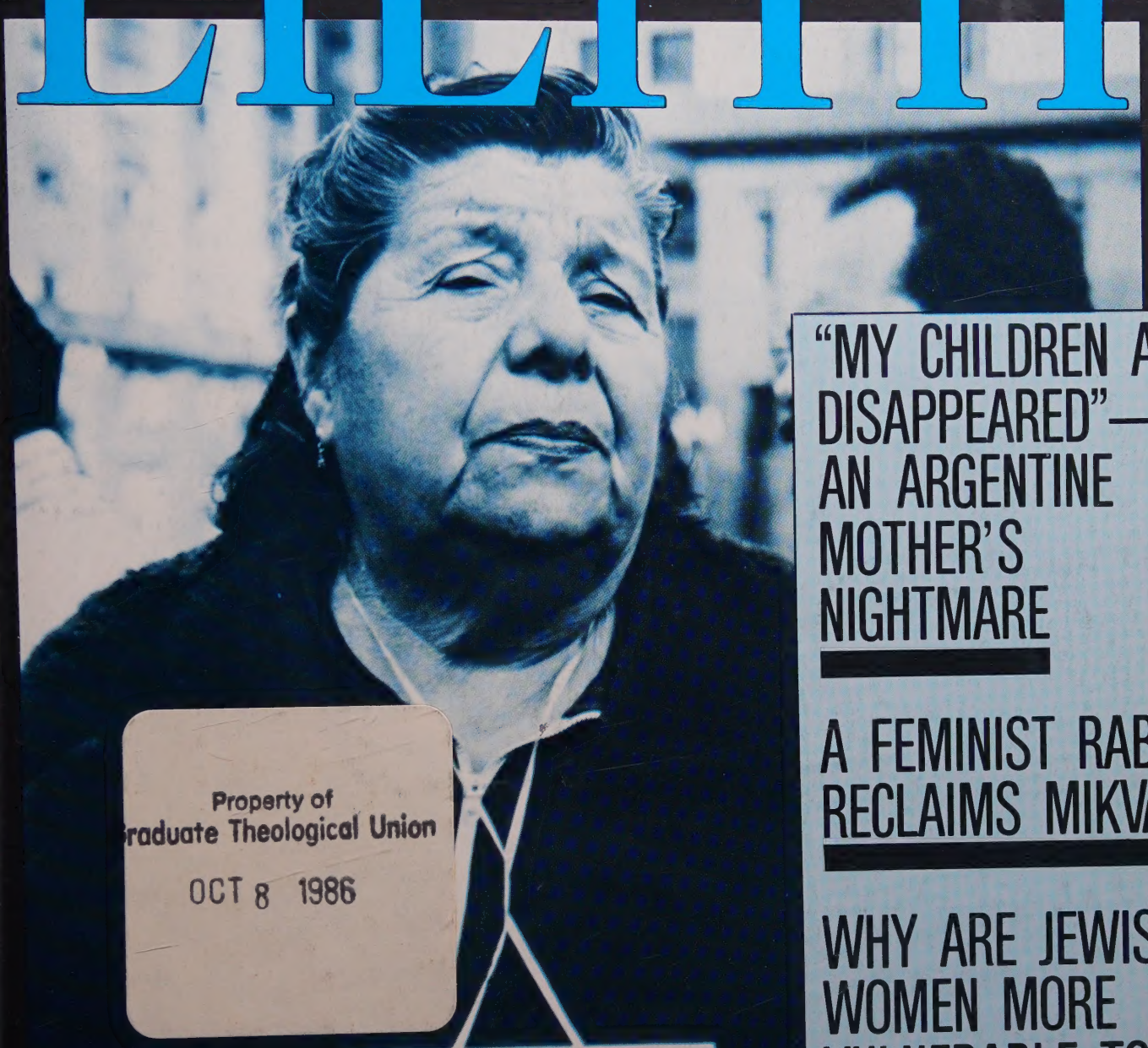
THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE #15 $3.50 SUMMER 1986/5746

LILITH



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"MY CHILDREN ARE DISAPPEARED"— AN ARGENTINE MOTHER'S NIGHTMARE

A FEMINIST RABBI RECLAIMS MIKVAH

WHY ARE JEWISH WOMEN MORE VULNERABLE TO RAPE? CAN WE FIGHT BACK?

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY

HAROLD NAIDEAU ©

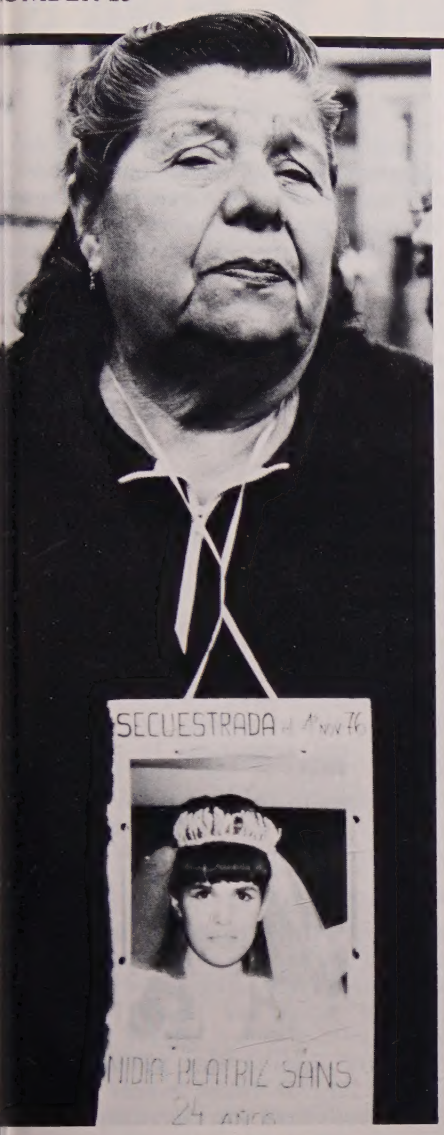
WAVE, BRONZE. **ARIELLA SHAMIR**

Israeli-born, American-trained sculptor Ariella Shamir works primarily in marble and bronze, drawing out of her materials sensual, abstract, organic shapes which seem to transform themselves with each shift in angle.

She says that "the question for all artists, whether visual artists or poets, is 'When am I done?' I can always tell. It's like peeling away stone. When I get to the skin I know that I am touching something beyond which I shouldn't penetrate. I work very slowly and I almost *listen* to the material."

Shamir's work is widely exhibited, and her attenuated, near-abstract head of an Egyptian woman (entitled "Mitzriyah" in Hebrew) was acquired by Tel Aviv University's Hall of Human Rights after the peace treaty was signed between Israel and Egypt.

Shamir, whose work is on display through late 1986 at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in New York, took a course in sculpting in Riverdale, New York, when her three now-grown children were still very young. "I don't think there are coincidences; I recognized right away that this was for me. Then I worked very hard, balancing my life and my work. In every area, not just the arts, people have a creativity which *must* find its path—it's an energy within you."



On the cover: One of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, who testifies in a film of that name about their struggle to learn the fate of the 30,000 Argentinians who "disappeared" in the Junta's 1976-1983 reign of terror.

THE PREPARED TABLE (The *Shulchan Aruch*) is the authoritative code of Jewish behavior according to *halacha* (law). As Jewish feminists continue to rediscover and rework Jewish practice, the contents of LILITH may serve as an evolving Prepared Table for a new code of behavior.

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam. *"After the Holy one created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Adam said, 'You are fit to be below me and I above you.' Lilith said, 'We are equal because we both come from the earth'."* (From the *Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b*).

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WHY JEWISH WOMEN GET RAPED—AN INTERVIEW WITH PAULINE BART

by Susan Weidman Schneider

LILITH talks with Pauline Bart, co-author of *Stopping Rape*, whose research shows that Jewish women are the least likely to be able to resist an assault. She tells why, and suggests ways we can protect ourselves and others.

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TAKING BACK THE WATERS

by Elyse Goldstein

A Reform rabbi describes her own mikvah experience, and proposes a revival of interest among non-Orthodox women in this ancient Jewish women's ritual of immersion, the traditional preface to sexual intercourse after menstruation.

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"MY CHILDREN ARE DISAPPEARED"—A JEWISH MOTHER'S STRUGGLE AGAINST ARGENTINE FASCISTS

by Aviva Cantor

The story of Renee Epelbaum. As one of the "Madres" of Argentina, she is a key figure in the mothers' movement to discover the fate of the 30,000 persons (about 3,000 of them Jews) abducted by the security forces during the 1976-83 reign of terror and still missing. Epelbaum tells here how her three children were seized, and of her largely unsuccessful attempts to mobilize Jewish community leaders in Argentina and the United States; some did support action on behalf of the "disappeared," while most counseled silence and accommodation as the junta tortured and murdered.

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a short story by Toby Mostysser

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Why we are still suffering, despite (and sometimes because of) changing legal attitudes towards women and men: *The Divorce Revolution* by Lenore J. Weitzman and *Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody* by Phyllis Chesler, reviewed by Rochelle Saidel.

FROM THE EDITORS

Women raped. Women whose children have been abducted and "disappeared" by a fascist regime. The two major features in this issue of LILITH focus on these subjects. Both teach us that accommodation is the wrong strategy for combatting individual or group terrorization—and that sucessful resistance requires collective and communal support.

Phyllis Chesler, in LILITH #2, described rape as "terrorism against the female body politic." Sociologist Pauline Bart's research (page 8) leads her to conclude that Jewish women are particularly vulnerable to rape. She tells LILITH that one reason for this is that we have been socialized to respond with what has been a historical Jewish strategy under oppression: accommodation ("you give a little here and you take a little there and you survive"). This strategy, Bart shows, has proved counter-productive in rape avoidance. What does work is active resistance. Understanding that society as a whole fosters a feeling of physical helplessness in women, and encourages men to view women as objects, Bart considers how the Jewish community can alter these attitudes and teach women to resist rape more effectively.

In Argentina, the "accommodations" of its Jewish community (and, with few exceptions, world Jewry) to the junta's terror had tragic results: the abduction and murder of "thought criminals" by the security forces continued unabated, and failed to free the "disappeared" or end the disappearances. It was only collective resistance—initiated by the courageous Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo—that brought an end to the regime and its reign of terror (1976-1983). By risking their lives to demand that the junta disclose the fate of their abducted children, the Madres, one of whom is profiled in this issue (p.17), became the midwives of the larger resistance to the junta, and were directly responsible for the renewal of democracy in Argentina.

The lesson here for Jewish feminists—both from Bart's work on rape resistance and from Renee Epelbaum's struggle—is the importance of collective resistance. At a time when so many American women have been led to believe that collective action by women is unnecessary, embarrassing or ineffective, we must remind ourselves that mutual support and collective action express the highest ideals of both Judaism and feminism. Judaism teaches that *"kol Yisrael arevim zeh l'zeh"*—all Jews are responsible for one another—and feminism has taught us that our personal struggles are ultimately political, and that only when they are addressed collectively will our own lives and the world change.

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LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Dear LILITH:

Regarding your article on "Power Plays" (#14): while it is true that the women's affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, has its own Board of Trustees (all women of course), the main Board—the UAHC Boad of Trustees—is not as stated, a "men's board with the women's auxiliary generally having one slot on it." Currently 34 of the 180 members of the UAHC Board of Trustees are women. That is approximately 19 percent of the total, an improvement over the 12 percent that existed about five years ago. Moreover, 15 percent of those serving on the UAHC Executive Committee are women, nine out of 60.

There is, however, only one woman Vice Chair of the UAHC, a figure that has remained static over the years. Several women now hold positions as Vice Chair of various Commissions. While only one woman has so far chaired a Commission, we can reasonably expect that more women will be moving into these positions in the next few years. While greater strides are needed, progress has taken place in slow, gradual increments.

Women have made the greatest strides in positions of power as Regional Presidents of the UAHC. Since each Region has its own Board of organizational structure, these are positions of considerable authority which automatically entitle each Regional President to a seat on the Naional UAHC Board of Trustees. Until about five years ago there was not a single woman serving as Regional President. Today there are seven women Regional Presidents and 10 men. This is a vast improvement in a relatively short period of time.

At the last UAHC Biennial, November 1985, a Resolution was passed by the General Assembly endorsing the concept of equal pay for comparable work within the Jewish community, as well as in society-at-large. While much more remains to be done, the picture, at least as far as Reform Judaism is concerned, is by no means as bleak as portrayed.

Annette Daum
Associate Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
New York, NY

CORRECTION

The article "Riding High: Annie Oakley's Jewish Contemporaries" (#14) should have read "By 1855 (not 1885) an estimated 6,000 Jews had reached California."

Dear LILITH:

I have been the first woman president of the Jewish National Fund, an umbrella organization with a majority of men on its board. Nevertheless, I received whole-hearted cooperation during my four-year term office, and at no time felt any restraints because of my sex.

I would like to point out, too, that the Chairmanship of the American Section of the World Zionist Organization for the last 120 years has been held by women. The present Chairman is Bernice Tannenbaum, and I was her immediate predecessor succeeding Rose Halprin. Here again, there was no difficulty in assuming leadership.

On another level, I find it hard to understand your omission of Hadassah which is the largest Jewish Women's Organization in the world which carries a tremendous responsibility. In fact, I know of no other organization which has assumed the full responsibility of building medical centers in Israel, equipping them and maintaining them. All decisions are made by the National Board of Hadassah.

Charlotte Jacobson, ***President***
Jewish National Fund
New York, NY

Dear LILITH:

I was disappointed at the inclusion of your career survey in Issue #13. I would not have expected LILITH editors to jump on the narrowly conceived career bandwagon. The fact that the survey states its special interest in women with careers in business is even more dismaying. While I wholeheartedly support women's efforts to advance themselves professionally as a way of living up to their potential, the current emphasis on "career" and "success" disregards other kinds of potential—and very Jewish potential at that—that people may be striving towards. I am speaking of non-material success: caring for the needy in one's neighborhood; learning to treat each person as a being created in God's image; feeding the hungry; furthering one's own Jewish and secular education; creating art; learning to love; in short, becoming the best person one can be. Many men have shunned or forgotten these aspirations in pursuit of the reward of money, status, power. Is this really what we want for ourselves?

Ruth Mason
New York, NY

Dear LILITH:

Australian Jewish history was made in April 1986, when what is believed to be the first women's minyan (quorom of worshippers) was held on the shores of Lake Macquarie, a scenic resort north of Sydney. This was not a pre-arranged event, but a spontaneous response to there being too few men for a conventional minyan.

The group was attending a weekend university orientation camp conducted by the Australian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS). As Shabbat was falling it became clear that there were still only a few men and quite a number of women. Two women closed the door separating the men from the women, and began the service rather tentatively, but the feeling in the room was very warm and encouraging.

As a matter of fact, in Melbourne, the city with the largest Jewish population—about 35,000—the Jewish student body made an unsuccessful attempt to have a regular women's minyan last year.

Probably the most significant factor here is the small number of Jews—about 70,000 spread over five cities and scattered in several suburbs. Of these, it seems that only the Orthodox are interested in any form of worship at all. Even male minyanim have trouble collecting up a minimum of ten on weekdays.

In Australia there are no Conservative synagogues, so unless one joins a Reform congregation, of which there are only a handful in the whole country, there is no opportunity for female participation.

Orthodox women who would be capable of conducting a minyan seem to be imbued with the doctrines of the obligations of the men and the exemptions of the women, and they seem to enjoy the freedom of *not* having to go to synagogue. They are prepared to suffer the porportional lessening of rights and respect that comes with avoiding responsibility.

Non-religious women appear uninterested and avoid religion. Most would prefer to turn their energies into becoming doctors or lawyers, or follow more profitable and convential pursuits.

It seemed a shame that men had to default before the women rose in their unused strength and knowledge to contribute their part to the enriching religious experience.

Viva Hammer
Education Officer-
Regional/Australian Union of Jewish Students

KOL ISHAH

Kol Ishah—"Woman's Voice." Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

100,000 MORE JEWISH BABIES?

If Likud Knesset Member Meir Cohen-Avidov has his way, the coming Hebrew year, 5747, will be proclaimed the year of "internal immigration." Cohen-Avidov wants 100,000 *extra* Jewish babies to be born in Israel.

These infants, Cohen-Avidov insists, would offset the demographic decline in the Diaspora, and also help Israeli Jews "keep up with Israeli Arabs, who have much larger families."

Inasmuch as having babies is not a matter of "keeping up with the Joneses," fellow Likud M.K. Sara Doron accused Cohen-Avidov of trying to turn women into "birth machines." There were similar remarks from most of the other women in Knesset. Satirist Yoel Marcus, writing in *Ha'aretz*, proposed "a complete ban on the import of contraceptives (which would also save dollars, be noted); evening public service ads on TV showing, in graphic detail, just how to make babies. They would be followed by an erotic film and then, at least two or three times a week by a sudden electrcity blackout, which, if the New York experience is any guide, would lead to an upsurge in births nine months later."

Cohen-Avidov believes patriotic and economic motivations will cause an increase in births: for example, he suggests free day-care centers, university education and bus transportation for every third child. But these actions seem unlikely given current budgetary pressures.

Nechemia Meyers comments in *The Jewish Floridian* that "even if these measures were put into effect, they would have only a small influence on potential parents. Israelis, like people elsewhere in the West, see a clear link between small families and social economic advancement. Oriental Jewish couples, who 30 years ago were likely to have five or six children, now tend to follow the pattern of European Jews and have two or three. This accounts for the fact that the average births per Jewish woman declined from over 3.5 in 1950-53 to 2.8 in 1979-83. A similar decline has occurred, incidentally, among Christian Arabs, a more Westernized group than their Moslem brethren.

"One segment of the Jewish population, the ultra-Orthodox, still have large families. A recent survey of such families in Jerusalem by the Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies showed an average of sever children per family."

WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUPS—THE ONGOING CONTROVERSY (AMONG MEN)

Reacting to the responsum issued last year by five Yeshiva University scholars, which declared that separate women's prayer groups are prohibited by Jewish law (see Kol Ishah story, "Orthodox Women's Prayer Groups" in *Lilith* No. 14), Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits, a prominent Orthodox spokesman, wrote the following letter last September to the Editor of *The Jerusalem Post*:

Sir,—I read with interest your article of September 11, "Orthodox women fume at rabbis." One may no longer remain silent. I have read carefully the responsum of the five talmudists at Yeshiva University, forbidding prayer services by women. I wish to state unequivocally that their so-called 'T'shuva" has nothing to do with Halacha.

People will have to realize that knowledge and understanding are not identical. One may know a lot and understand very little

There may be a great deal of Orthodoxy around. Unfortunately, there is only very little halachic Judaism

May God grant to the women of Women's Tefilla Network strength and courage to continue their efforts to the best of their abilities.

In addition Emanual Rackman, President of Bar Ilan University stated in the Los Angeles *Messenger* last January that "even though I do not like women's separate services, I recommend that rabbis should not be hasty in forbidding them." Rackman went on to clarify that:

I do not like them because I want to be where the women in my family pray and, after the service, I want to share reactions with them to all that was said and done. But if there are devout and committed women to whom such services are meaningful, then by all means, they should not be made to feel that their innovation is blameworthy...Some of the most cherished halachic rules and institutions of today began as innovations upon which one rabbi or another must have frowned when they were first projected.

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS VOCAL IN THEIR SUPPORT OF PRO-CHOICE

B'nai B'rith Women, the National Council of Jewish Women and the American Jewish Congress have gone on record as vocal opponents of President Reagan's recent attempt to induce the Supreme Court to overturn its 1973 ruling legalizing abortion.

In response to Reagan's urging that the Court reverse its landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision, leaders of the three organizations issued strong statements supporting a woman's constitutional right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. The American Jewish Congress statement read, in part:

Roe v. Wade *affirmed the right of a woman to decide whether to bear a child. It put an end to back-alley abortions and significantly enhanced the dignity of all women. The Administration's call to turn back the clock to those days is shocking...*

"Given its failure to marshal sufficient support for a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion, and given polls which show consistently that a substantial majority of American support the Roe v. Wade *decision, the Administration is now pursuing the extraordinary course of calling upon the Court to reverse itself. We are confident that the Court will not do so, and we pledge, in concert with other religious and civic groups, to continue to safeguard the right of women to be sovereign over their own bodies."*

The organizations' responses to the Reagan initiative are in keeping with the long-standing support of Jewish women, and the American Jewish community as a whole, for the pro-choice position. This was confirmed in a recent national survey conducted by B'nai B'rith Women which revealed that, while a majority of Jewish *and* non-Jewish women believed that "every woman who wants an abortion ought to be able to have one," a full 91% of the Jewish women polled supported that contention.

FIRST WOMEN TRAINED AS RITUAL CIRCUMCISORS

Three women are among the seven physicians officially certified last October as New York's first formally trained Reform *mohalim* (ritual circumcisers).

The group of doctors—which includes a urologist, plastic surgeon, pediatrician, gynecologist and obstetrician—had completed an intensive 14-week course designed by the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to educate medical practitioners regarding the *Halachic* (Jewish legal) aspects of the *brit milah* (ritual circumcision). Graduates of the course are certified by the Reform *brit milah*

board, and are required to maintain an affiliation with a hospital, as well as active membership in a Reform congregation.

In the past, "most liberal Jews either had their baby boys circumcised in the hospital by a resident physician or would call in an Orthodox *mohel*," said Susan Fletcher, a fourth-year rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College, and coordinator of the *mohel* program. "Reform *mohalim* will recognize that often a family has a tenuous relationship to Judaism. They will seize the opportunity and make it an educational experience, and introduce the family to Judaism."

Women are encouraged to participate in the program, and several female physicians are registered in HUC's *mohel* course this spring. Moreover, according to Fletcher, "We pay attention to feminist issues and encourage equal participation of women in the *brit milah* ceremony. Traditional *mohalim* tend to ignore a mother's feelings, and most mothers spend the time outside the room."

Conservative Jewish leaders, who are considering the establishment of a training course for *mohalim* at the Jewish Theological Seminary, would recognize a circumcision performed by a female *mohelet*, according to Rabbi Joel Roth, Associate Professor of Talmud at the Seminary and Chairman of the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. "Halachically, women are entitled to perform ritual circumcision," said Roth. "If and when the Seminary starts a program of *mohalim*, there are strong grounds to include women in the program."

WOMEN IN ISRAELI NATIONAL POLITICS

While more Israeli women than ever are active in municipal politics, they are not climbing the political ladder to the Knesset and ministerial positions, according to Sharon Shenhav, head of Na'amat's Jerusalem legal services office.

Shenhav reported that about 100 women currently sit on Israeli city councils, and tht 21 municipalities have advisory committees on the status of women. Although the current Knesset, like its predecessor, includes nine women members, no women are in the cabinet (the previous cabinet had one woman minister).

In a recent talk to Pioneer Women/ Na'amat leaders in New York, Shenhav discussed Na'amat's recent efforts to educate Israeli women on political issues and said, "We have concentrated on bread-and-butter issues for a long time, and women are now cutting their teeth on local isues. But it's time to put our efforts toward national politics. If there were 25 women in the Knesset, it would make a big difference."

APPOINTMENTS

Liz Baroh, elected President of the Young Leadership Division of the American Sephardi Federation.

Dr. Aviva Barzel, appointed Executive Vice President of Histadruth Ivrith of America.

Susan Becker of The Bronx, N.Y., elected President of the North American Aliyah movement.

Henriette Beilis, elected President of the American Friends of the Alliance Israelite Universelle.

Sandra Berliner of Toledo, named Rabbi of Tifereth B'nai Israel in Warrington, Pa.

Shira Herzog Bessin of Toronto, named Executive Director of the Canada-Israel Committee.

Dorothy Bucksbaum, elected President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines.

Ann Holland Cohn, reelected President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo.

Edith Everett, elected acting President of the American Friends of Haifa University.

Adele Greenblatt, elected President of the Jewish Federation of Cumberland County, N.J.

Charlotte Holstein of Syracuse, appointed the city's Commissioner for Women's Issues.

Aubrey Herman of St. Louis, elected Executive Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati.

Susan Jacobson, elected President of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio.

Raya Jaglom of Tel Aviv, elected a Vice President of the World Jewish Congress. Ms. Jaglom is the first woman to be elected to this post in the 50-year history of the WJC.

Dr. Deborah E. Lipstadt, selected Director of the Brandeis-Bardin Institute. Dr. Lipstadt is the first woman to lead this major national Jewish institution.

Annette Morganstern, named Director of the Zionist Organization of America, Dallas area.

Doris Rosenberg, elected President of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services in N.Y.

Barbara Ribakove of New York, reelected Chairperson of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry. Ms. Ribakove also was named the agency's first Executive Director.

Pearl Stahl, named Director of the American Red Magen David for Israel.

Andrea Stringer, elected President of the Hamilton, Ontario Jewish Federation.

Gittel Tata, named Executive Director of the Jewish Community Council of Ottawa, the first woman in Canada to hold this post.

Peggy Tishman has been named President of New York's Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. She is the first to preside over the organization newly combined with the United Jewish Appeal of New York.

PLACEMENT OF NEWLY ORDAINED WOMEN RABBIS

Half of the 18 women ordained last spring as Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative rabbis were appointed assistant rabbis of congregations as of last November, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's annual survey of such appointments.

The 18 new rabbis brought to 110 the number of American women entering the rabbinate since the process began in the Reform movement more than 12 years ago. The recent placements resembled those of previous years, in that most of the newly ordained women rabbis assumed positions as assistant pulpit rabbis, while the remainder entered the fields of Jewish education or communal service.

Of last spring's female rabbinical school graduates, 12 are Reform, five are Reconstructionist and one, Amy Eilberg, became the first Conservative woman rabbi.

REFORM

Barbara Abrahamson, of St. Paul, Assistant Rabbi, Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo, Cal.

Laurie Coskey, of Beverly Hills, Cal., Assistant Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel in San Diego.

Marla Feldman, of Toledo, Ohio, Assistant Rabbi, Temple Emanu-El in Sarasota, Fla.

Dayle Friedman, of Denver, Col., full-time Chaplain, Philadelphia Geriatric Center.

Barbara Goldman-Wartell, of Evanston, Ill., solo Rabbi, Congregation B'nai David in Visalia, Cal.

Linda Henry, of New York City, Assistant Rabbi, Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan.

Rachel Hertzman, of Louisville, Ky., Director, Outreach Program, Southeast Region, Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Miami, and part-time educator and youth director at Congregation Kol Ami in Plantation, Fla.

Karyn Kedar, of Baltimore, Md., teacher, Hod Ha'Sharon High School in Israel.

Charisse Kranes, of Cincinnati, Assistant Rabbi, Temple de Hirsch in Seattle.

Julie Spitzer, of Jacksonville, Fla., Assistant Rabbi, Temple Emanu-El in Livingston, N.J.

Susan Warshell, of Highland Park, Ill., Assistant Rabbi, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Short Hills, N.J.
Judith Zabarenko, of Rockford, Ill., Assistant Rabbi, Congregation Emanu-El in Houston.

RECONSTRUCTIONIST
Sandra Berliner, of Toledo, Ohio, solo Rabbi, Tiferes B'nai Israel, in Warrington, Pa.
Deborah Brin, of Minneapolis, Chaplain, Martin's Run Retirement Community in Media, Pa.
Bonnie Goldberg, of Brooklyn, Director of Group Services, YM-YWHA in Philadelphia.
Andrea Gouze, of the Bronx, N.Y., made aliya to Israel.
Vivian Schirn, of Los Angeles, solo Rabbi, Temple Hatikvah, Flanders, N.J.

CONSERVATIVE
Amy Eilberg, of Providence, R.I., Chaplain, Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Susan Bender of Hawaii received the Justice Levinson Award for her paper in constitutional law titled "Regulating Pornography Through Zoning: Can We 'Clean Up' Waikiki and Kaimuki?" The paper will be published in the University of Hawaii's Law Review.
Raquel Bengio Bensimon was honored with the Sephardic Heritage Award, given by the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel in Los Angeles. Ms. Bensimon is the first woman to receive this honor since the award was created in 1962.
Rosellen Brown of Houston won the $1,000 Janet Heidinger Kafka prize for fiction for her third novel, *Civil Wars* (Knopf).
Dr. Paula Hyman, Dean of the Seminary College of Jewish Studies and Associate Professor of History at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, has been awarded a Fellowship for Independent Study and Research by the National Endowment for the Humanities for 1986-87.
Tamra Janowitz, a fiction writer from New York City, was awarded a $2,000 grant from the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, Inc. The foundation provides grants to deserving scholars and professionals in the fields of arts and humanities.
Maxine Kumin of Warner, New Hampshire, received the $10,000 Fellowship of the Academy of American Poets for distinguished poetic achievement.
Barbara Mandel of Cleveland has been inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame. Ms. Mandel, President of the National Council of Jewish Women, was recognized for improving the status of women.

Scholarships for 973 Israeli women attending more than 50 institutions of higher education have been awarded by the Perpetual Scholarship Fund of Pioneer Women/Na'amat.

Stipends were given to a diverse cross-section of women—the largest number studying technical subjects as part of a campaign to encourage women to pursue high-technology employment. Judges awarded extra points to students (including Arab and Druze women) planning to enter male-dominated fields, and older women resuming their studies. One hundred mothers were also awarded scholarships.

The Perpetual Scholarship Fund was established in 1967; its grants are made possible by special gifts to Pioneer Women/Na'amat.

OBITUARIES

Martha Schlamme, the cabaret singer, died October 13, 1985, two months after suffering a stroke. She was 60.

Born in Vienna, Schlamme was internationally known for her Kurt Weill interpretations. She also had a 12-language repertory of folk songs which included many Yiddish tunes. Schlamme performed in a number of Broadway shows, including "Fiddler On The Roof," where she played the part of Golde.

Born Marthe Haftel, Schlamme studied classical singing in Vienna and Paris, but had to flee with her family to Britain in 1938. She began her peforming career in an internment camp on the Isle of Man. After World War II, she specialized in folk songs in London, and immigrated to the US in 1948, quickly establishing a national reputation with a program called "Songs of Many Lands." Although she was outstanding as a singer of sophisticated love songs, Martha brought a special warmth and tenderness to intimate Yiddish songs.

The singer's marriage to Hans Schlamme in the mid-40's ended in divorce. She left no survivors.

Leila Rosen Young, a sociologist and active feminist, died of cancer on March 20, 1986 in Bethesda, Md. at the age of 43.

Dr. Young, sociologist and senior research scholar at the Center for Population Research at Georgetown University, was active in the Washington Jewish community, especially with the local Jewish feminist movement. She was a catalyst for feminist research and projects and instrumental in obtaining women's equal participation in worship at her synagogue, Congregation Beth El in Bethesda. A founding member of the area's Jewish Women's Caucus, Dr. Young was also a member of the Dimona Chapter of Pioneer Women/Na'amat USA, and the executive chapter of B'nai Brith Women. She was a leading member of Sociologists for Women in Society.

Dr. Young had recently completed a pilot study on the effect of women's increasing participation in religious life has on changes in the synagogue. The summer issue of *Conservative Judaism* magazine will feature her article describing that study.

She is survived by her husband, Dr. Joseph L. Young; her daughters Michal and Avigayl; her mother, Sara Rosen Kaufman; and sisters Dr. Sherry Rosen and Roberta Goldstein.

REMEMBERING LAURA Z. HOBSON

For a long time I have believed that the most important question one person can ask another is, "How did you get to be the way you are?" Hoping to find the answer, I read autobiographies obsessively. Specifically, what I have wanted to know is whether real change is possible.

When I read *Laura Z: A Life* about three years ago, I knew I was onto something. I had read *Gentleman's Agreement*, had seen the movie; that was my only reference point as far as Laura Z. Hobson was concerned.

I had thought obsessively, too, on Muriel Rukeyser's famous question: "What if one woman were to tell the truth about her life" and its answer: "The world would split open." Of course, it never does . And now here was Laura Zametkin Hobson determined to do nothing less than answer Rukeyser's question, vowing to omit nothing. I loved it. I believed her. I wanted to know more.

First Papers, her fourth novel, published in 1964, chronicles her life with her parents and her radical childhood. Her other novels are also based clearly upon events and circumstances in her own life. *Untold Millions* (1982) is about the dying marriage of an advertising copywriter, *The Tenth Month* (1970) tells the story of an unwed mother, *The Trespassers*, her first novel, published in 1945, shows the human cost of facism and the heartbreak of emigration quotas. *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) examines the significance of "polite" antisemitism; *Consenting Adult* (1975), a mother's coming to terms with her son's homosexuality. Like characters in these books, Hobson has been a copy writer, an unmarried mother, a political activist, mother of a homosexual son. As she said in a 1983 interview,"When I write fiction I take a part of my life and create a whole other creature around it."

As I prepared a lecture on "The Life and Art of Laura Z. Hobson" one December evening, I took my half-filled

sheet out of the typewriter and wrote her a letter, explaining I would be in New York the following March, I had read and admired all of her books, and I had called a course I was teaching "From Lilith to Laura Z: Selected Jewish Women Writers." I wanted to meet her, tell her how much her work had meant to me. I sent the letter directly to her publisher; to me it was a message in a bottle.

Within a week I received her response. She thanked me for writing and said she had liked the course title; "quite a bouquet," she called it—and then she set me straight:

...my own perception of myself is definitely not as a "Jewish Woman Writer," but as a writer, a woman and a Jew.

Remember Saul Bellow's interview after the Nobel Prize when he said he was not a Jewish American writer, but a writer who was an American and Jewish? I feel quite strongly that he was right in making the distinction.

She went on to say she could not make appointments as far ahead as March (this was December):

I am in a storm of work, trying to finish Volume Two, and barely let myself make dates with my close friends, except on the spur of the moment.

She suggested I call when I arrived, gave me her unlisted number: "If it is possible I'll set a date for a visit." I was certain no visit would take place.

Monday. When I arrived at her apartment, I understood that the doorman and elevator man had been warned of my arrival; they greeted me warmly and gave me the apartment number immediately.

When the elevator arrived at her floor, she opened the door to her apartment and was at the elevator almost before I was out of it.

She acted glad to see me, could not have been friendlier.

She took complete charge, directing me to a chair near her circular red leather-topped desk, close enough for me to see the pile of manuscript pages on top, backs of pictures, a piece of something that looked like plexiglass, inscribed: "Laura Z. Hobson: Literary Lion."

It was a huge comfortable room, perfect setting for a cold night and for drinking the sherry she offered.

I glanced at my watch as she seated herself in a chair opposite me at the side of my desk. Eight o'clock on the dot. I had an hour. Where to start?

She told me she had had surgery for cancer, but was now cured. She told me she had had cataract surgery, which I had guessed from reading Eugenie's story in *Over and Above* (1979). I asked if her eyes bothered her now: "Only when I've worked 15 or 16 hours a day and they get a little gritty."

I asked about the long hiatus beteween the publication of *The Celebrity* in 1951 and *First Papers* in 1964. She said, "Let's check my calendar," and proceeded to open the door to a closet hidden in a corner of the living room. It contained floor-to-ceiling shelves holding copies of all her books—and the famous little red logs from 1929 to the present, their dates on the spine in gold. Before she shut the door to the closet, she said, "I want them to take a picture of this for Volume II."

We looked through a couple of the red log books, but they didn't reveal much, other than minor illnesses and the deadline for paying Harvard tuition.

RODDY McDOWALL COURTESY DONALD FINE, INC.

I asked if she considered herself a feminist, and I heard what I probably deserved to hear. "Well, I did what I did because I had to do it. And I had learned that I could do whatever I wanted from my mother and father. I didn't use the word because we didn't have the same vocabulary then." She told me of a visit from Marlo Thomas, presumably before production for *Consenting Adult* began. Thomas told her that she and Gloria Steinem had not "discovered" feminism, that women like Hobson, had been the real pioneers—and she seemed to like that very much.

She talked then about how important she felt it was for her to tell the truth in her autobiography, even when it meant saying she was wrong. For example, she said, when *Gentleman's Agreement* came out, she was offered an award for "best Jewish book of the year" by the Jewish Book Council. But she turned it down: "I thought that if a book was a good book, it was a good book period, not just a good Jewish book." She had, she said, recently phoned the Jewish Book Council, wanting to review the 40-year-old correspondence. Of course, they did not still have it. But she knew she had been wrong to turn down the award and wanted to say so in Volume II.

Later I realized that she wanted the JBC to offer the award again, and this time she would have accepted it.

I had told her in my letter how much I liked *Over and Above:* what I did not tell her was why—that the ideas expressed by Amy, especially in regard to Israel, represented an about-face from those in *Gentleman's Agreement* concerning "Jewish nationalism."

Shortly before ten she said she was beginning to feel tired—but she was still in control: "Now. Let's summarize. What can you say about me now that you could not say before you met me? What are you going to say next time you go around giving talks about me?"

I knew there was a right answer, and I wasn't at all certain that I had it. What I said was, "You have showed me, by writing so honestly in your novels and autobiography, that change is possible." I was afraid to be too specific so late in our visit, that I might not be able to substantiate the ways in which her attitudes towards women, Judaism, Israel, had changed. But I meant much else besides.

And that was it. I never saw her again. I wrote and reiterated how important our visit had been to me. I compared the visit and its significance to the yellow box, which Tessa (in *Consenting Adult*) keeps to contain articles on changing attitudes towards homosexuality; I said I kept our visit in a metaphorical box like that.

I sent her a copy of *The Woman Who Lost Her Names*, an anthology of women who are writers and Jews (she would approve of the terminology). I sent her the fiction issue of *LILITH*. I never heard from her again. I rationalized her lack of response in several ways: she was busy finishing Volume II, she had not liked me much after all, she wasn't interested. It did not occur to me that she might be sick. I had believed her when she said she had quite a few good years left. I had begun to fantasize other visits.

Now I think that she agreed to see me not, as she had said, because I was from Texas and "that's so far away," but because she knew she did not have long to live.

I said Kaddish for her on the Friday night after I learned that she died. It might not have mattered to her. But I had to do it. I did not know how else to bear witness to the fact that she had lived and died. Perhaps my act was unnecessary; we weren't, after all, close. And that's true, and also false. Like so much else.

—Julia Wolf Mazow

Pauline Bart is a professor of sociology in the departments of psychiatry and sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has been a visiting professor/scholar at Harvard, University of California at Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, and San Diego State University. Bart received her PhD in 1967, writing about depressed middle-aged women, a subject she addressed in a widely reprinted article: "Portnoy's Mother's Complaint." Her books include A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Orifice, Taking the Men Out of Menopause *and* The Loneliness of the Long Distance Mother.

In this interview, Bart discusses some of the findings from her new book, Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies, *co-authored with Patricia O'Brien (Pergamon Press: $11.95, softcover; $27.50, hardcover). Bart studied 94 women for the book; 51 had been attacked and avoided being raped, and 43 were raped. Forty percent of them had a prior rape or rape avoidance experience, or both. Of the 94 women, 18 were Jewish.*

Unique to Bart's study, she says, is her emphasis on demographic and background information; the women in the sample were all asked to supply facts regarding their ethnic backgrounds, parents' educational levels, and socialization experiences as children.

Several of Bart's findings are of particular importance to Jewish women, for her study explodes many of the myths we may have held about our ability to talk our way out of potentially dangerous situations, and hence about our ability to resist rape. While Jewish women have always been considered aggressive, Bart found that this aggressiveness is primarily verbal. According to Bart's study, verbal strategies are not *effective in avoiding rape, once you are attacked. She found that Jewish women in her study were less likely to utilize physical strategies. They lacked "street smarts" and tended to think and analyze the situation before springing into action. It was this cerebral impulse that seemed to differentiate their experiences from those of other women.*

The growing incidence of date rape and acquaintance gang rape on college campuses also leaves Jewish women particularly vulnerable, because they compose a far greater percentage of college students than of the general population (see box).

It is clear that Bart's findings have great importance for policy planning in the Jewish community. Jewish organizations have begun to provide for other survival needs with blood drives, food for the poor, and programming for victims of domestic violence. In the same vein, the Jewish community, she says, must help women learn to protect themselves from rape by sponsoring self-defense courses, and specifically rape avoidance instruction.

by Susan Weidman Schneider

WHY JEWISH WOMEN GET RAPED

LILITH INTERVIEWS PAULINE BART

LILITH: Do you really believe that a Jewish woman is less likely than other women to be able to resist a rapist?

BART: What I found is that, when they are attacked, Jewish women are more likely than women of other ethnic and religious groups to have the assault end in rape, rather than in what I call "rape avoidance."

Jewish women are just not raised to understand that the world is a jungle that we'll have to cope with ourselves.

It became clear to me, as I spoke to more women who had avoided being raped when attacked, that some women had a gut reaction of rage that somebody would dare do this to them. This rage was a very good predictor that a woman would be better able to resist attack. Some people were terrified of being killed and therefore thought that by being compliant they would trade off and they wouldn't be killed.

The ones who had the rage reaction were better able to resist. They just had this attitude of, "Who does he think he is that he can do this?" and "Nobody has a right to do this," and they didn't think about injury.

But I want to make sure that nobody who was raped feels invalidated by what I'm saying, that everybody did the best she could. Given the kind of propaganda that we have—how if you fight back he'll kill you, how you have to go along with him to survive, which is the Jewish accommodative strategy—the remarkable thing is that anybody resisted. And the ones that did, did out of this gut adrenalin rush, not because they intellectualized their resistance.

LILITH: What strategies did Jewish women use to try to avoid being raped?

BART: One of the things Jewish women do when somebody tries to rape them is a strategy that we have been mistakenly told generally would work: talking your way out. The traditional advice we have been given by police is that if you physically resist you're going to get killed. But talking—you try to get them to see you as a human being, you use feminine wiles—none of those things worked. Those are traditional ways that women have behaved to survive. Just like accommodative strategies were traditional ways Jews used to survive.

I was at the conference on women surviving the Holocaust and I had this sudden insight: Jews have traditionally survived, pretty much, by accommodation. You give a little here, a little there—and you survive. Along came the Nazis and the Jews thought it was going to be the same thing: you give a little here and there. This didn't work because it was a death machine. Now the same thing with rape. If you could finesse, argue, use verbal techniques, offer money, and this would be effective, then Jewish women would be very effective.

Jews and women are very similar—the strategies that Jews have used historically

to survive were strategies of accommodation. The way that women—who are a subordinated gender, just like Jews are a subordinated ethnic group—survive is by accommodation and by appealing to the mercy of the attacker.

In studies of women who have been raped, it turns out that, in stopping rape, pleading is relatively useless; physical resisting, yelling and active strategies are effective. In fact, crying and pleading are associated with *being* raped, according to the findings of this study.

The strategies which have been effective for Jews, which have been these accommodative strategies and verbal strategies, have not been effective in stopping rape.

LILITH: What in Jewish family life predisposes Jewish women to use verbal strategies to dissuade the rapist?

BART: The socialization of most Jewish girls didn't emphasize fighting back. For example, I got every kind of lesson you can imagine—but I never got self-defense lessons, I never got football lessons or basketball lessons. In the socialization section of the study, what is associated with rape avoidance is having played football—you get knocked down and then you get up. Most men have body contact sports and relatively few women have. To give kids a sense of competence in non-verbal areas is important.

One of the things that is associated with rape avoidance is having parents who did not intervene when you got into fights as kids. Jewish parents are very unlikely to tell the kid to go downstairs and fight his—or her—own battles.

LILITH: In your study, did you find that birth order made a difference in women's understanding of how to avoid rape?

BART: Oldest daughters were more likely to avoid, and having younger brothers was associated with avoidance. Jewish women were less likely to have younger brothers, because they came from smaller families.

Now, the thing about having a younger brother is interesting. And this is hypothetical but anecdotal support: if you had a younger brother that you could boss around and you knew his

Western mythology—as in the famous "Rape of the Sabine Women"—romanticizes sexual assault.

frailties, then you're less likely to be mystified by men. When I take self-defense classes, I can tell which women have brothers. They move across the floor, and they're just very different from women who haven't. They had to learn how to fight, more or less to protect themselves.

LILITH: Perhaps Jewish women are more accustomed to having men as their protectors in their family and their culture—they aren't used to dealing with situations alone; and in that existential moment, they don't have any experience in their own history to draw upon?

BART: I think it's very important that Jewish women, like Black women, understand that we may have to depend only on ourselves when we get older.

LILITH: Or when we're younger. Or any time.

BART: Women who had a great deal of household responsibility (we would say they had no childhoods) because their mothers had to go off to work and they were responsible for their younger siblings and for getting dinner and everything—had to be competent and were more likely to be rape avoiders. But Jewish women, raised in smaller families, were less likely to have had major household responsibility when they were young. Now I wouldn't say that a kid has to have major household responsibility, but has to have an alternative way of feeling like a competent, effective human being in the world in ways not simply related to intellect. Catholic women (perhaps because they are raised in larger families) appeared much more competent when we asked their responses to general crisis situations than did Black or Jewish women.

There's one other factor in terms of socialization differences between Black and Jewish women. I asked them, when they were growing up, what did they think their lives would be like when they grew up? Women who included marriage and the family (as well as some kind of employment) were more likely to be raped than women who didn't. Jewish women were more likely to say that than Black women, but it was a statement generally associated with being raped.

LILITH: Many of us "learned" about rape only in the form of jokes about Cossacks, and family tales about pogroms when girls and women were hidden in trees in order to avoid being raped by marauding Cossacks. Perhaps the reason rape was so seldom discussed *directly* in Jewish families (as you report in your book that it was in Black families) was that American Jews felt or hoped that they'd put rape in the past.

Looking back a generation or two, we

General Resolution Passed By The International Congress on Rape
Jerusalem, Israel
April 7-11, 1986

Rape is a pervasive and global social and political problem which can only be eliminated through strategies which recognize that it is caused by the unequal power between men and women. Rape is perpetuated by the ways in which femaleness, maleness and sexuality are defined and taught by societies.

Until rape is eliminated, individual defensive solutions can sometimes protect particular women and children in particular circumstances. Self-protective strategies are therefore important but they cannot rid societies of rape.

The International Congress on Rape strongly advocates improved treatment of victims/survivors by criminal justice systems, expanded funding of feminist support services which allow survivors of rape and sexual abuse to reclaim their power, treatment of offenders, and education programs that challenge societal acceptance of rape, placing the responsibility for violence against women where it belongs—on the perpetrators.

This Congress, resolving that it is essential to direct our efforts toward changing the social systems which perpetuate rape, urges all governments to mandate comprehensive rape and sexual abuse prevention initiatives.

Pauline Bart, a participant in the Congress notes: "There was an additional resolution passed stating that rape victims/survivors should be treated by women physicians and women counsellors when they come for care after the assault."

sense that Jewish women in America imagined that this was going to be a life that would be free from rape—as it was free of so many other physical threats to survival.

BART: Somehow many Jewish women feel that there's this invisible shield around them that's going to protect them. Whereas if you grow up like the Black women in my study, you know what you're up against.

Erikson says that the successful resolution of the first stage of development of the child is basic trust, and I say for women living under patriarchy, particularly in the city, it's basic *mistrust* that's a successful resolution. I mean, the one major difference between Jewish women and Black women was this issue of trust. The Black women *knew* it was trouble, and they mobilized themselves.

LILITH: And Jewish women didn't?

BART: All women were more likely to avoid rape if attacked outside. If there was a con-man approach (that is he didn't jump out of the bushes and simply knock you down, but he tried to manipulate you verbally) Jewish women were very vulnerable; that was where they exhibited their basic trust.

For example, one rape victim was looking for an apartment; when the superintendent wasn't there another man said that he could show her apartments. She didn't really want to, but she let him hook her into it. She assumed that because he was standing near a woman and a child that he was a part of a family, and a "family man" wouldn't do anything to her.

Well, he got her into an abandoned building, and then said, "You came here of your own free will," and used a rattailed comb as a weapon and raped her. Black women tended to avoid such situations. They felt that if you let somebody into your place, or you go into somebody else's place—that's it—it's all over. The assumption is that they are going to try to have sex with you. And many men of all ethnicities assume that you have given consent if you do that.

The rape avoiders picked up on danger *much earlier* than the women who were raped.

LILITH: Are you saying that *Jewish* women trust men more...?

BART: I think Jewish women *are* less suspicious of men. I think of men as the *goyim*. They are The Other; they are the people who oppress me.

I think that Jewish women also tend to be liberal (or more liberal or radical than the general population), and because of that, they don't want to act prejudiced and they are more likely to give men of color—and I know this specifically happened to women in my study—the benefit of the doubt. And to the extent that they're politically active—as Catholic women are also—they may go to meetings and come home late. The other thing is—in Chicago, and probably in other cities as well, they're more likely to live in integrated neighborhoods.

LILITH: Are you saying then that rapes are more likely to be interracial rapes?

BART: No. Now this is important. Rape, generally, is most likely to be *intra*-racial. But stranger rape—and my study—unfortunately—is disproportionately stranger rape—is *frequently* (not always) Black on Black, Black on white, and white on white. I think because of neighborhood segregation, white men are nervous about going into Black neighborhoods to pick up women because they're so much at risk. Whereas white women have to go into these neighborhoods—as school teachers, as social workers...but I'm not going to say that therefore Jewish women should stay in white-only neighborhoods.

One of the things about the Black families we studied was that they specifically talked about techniques in rape avoidance. Women heard their mothers and sisters and aunts, and also some of their mothers and sisters and aunts were raped.

I said it half-joking once, but I think that Black women should run seminars in street smarts for Jewish women—protect women generally. There are Black-Jewish dialogue groups, and I

• One-quarter of women in college today have been the victims of rape or attempted rape, and almost 90 percent of them knew their assailants.

• Seventy-five percent of female first-year students have experienced sexual aggression —ranging from verbal threats, physical coercion, or violence—from someone that they knew.

• One in every eight female college students have been raped, although almost three-quarters of them did not identify their experience as rape.

• Jewish women compose a far greater percentage of college students than their 1.7 percent of the general population.

These are only a few of the latest statistics, most emerging from the *Ms.* Magazine Campus Project on Sexual Assault.

Colleges across the country continue to be shocked whenever a date rape or acquaintance gang rape comes to light on their campuses. Neither isolated nor rare, these incidents continue to occur at all types of institutions, from small private colleges to large state universities, according to a study published last fall by the Project on the Status and Education of Women (PSEW) of the Association of American Colleges.

"On some campuses, we heard reports of gang rapes happening every week at parties. Apparently this behavior is far more common than anyone suspected," said Julie K. Ehrhart, co-author of the report *Campus Gang Rape: Party Games?*

According to Bernice R. Sandler, Director of PSEW and co-author, "The majority of the more than 50 campus gang rapes we identified happened at fraternity parties. In too many instances, fraternities do not foster healthy attitudes about relationships between young women and young men. It is time for institutions to look at the role that the fraternity and sorority system plays in campus activities and to reevaluate social life for all students."

Date rape, also known as acquaintance rape, is especially prevalent on college campuses, according to PSEW. Forty-seven percent of the rapes in the *Ms* study were by first or casual dates, or by romantic acquaintances, data corroborated by Carol Pritchard, author of *Avoiding Rape On and Off Campus.*

Many men admit that they often ignore a woman when she says 'no'."I get told 'no', and I keep going," said one male student at the University of Connecticut. "No one complains afterward." According to the *Ms.* study, one in every 12 men admitted to having fulfilled the prevailing definition of rape or attempted rape ,yet virtually none of those men identified themselves as rapists.

*Surviving Sexual Assault**, by the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women, is a book that has helped women recover from the trauma of sexual assault. It includes a national directory of rape crisis centers, hotlines, and victim assistance programs, and has been of assistance in explaining some of the problems that lead to rape.

This book as well as Pritchard's and Bart's,the PSEW and *Ms.* studies are only a few publications in a growing literature working to demystify rape and our attitudes about it. Colleges too are beginning to respond to this epidemic of rape in institutions of higher education by sponsoring rape avoidance programming, and some are attempting to alter the attitudes of college men. In view of Bart's new research on the vulnerability of Jewish women, and their disproportionately high numbers in universities of this country, self-defense for women and the re-education of men should begin before students even leave home.

LISSIE DIRINGER

*$4.95 plus $1.00 postage/handling from Survival for Women, 2554 Lincoln Blvd, Suite 228, Marina del Ray,CA 90291.

think that women's self-defense dialogues would be just terrific. I know that, for example, we hear that we shouldn't have weapons because they can only use it against us. I do know that the people who buy hand guns in Chicago are mainly young Black women. And I thought, good, because nobody else is going to protect them. And I was always suspicious about this business of, "They'll take it away and use it against you" because that hadn't shown up in my study; in fact one of the women took a guy's weapon and used it against him.

LILITH: Not a Jewish woman?

BART: No. But why shouldn't *we* learn how to shoot? What are we going to do—call the Anti-Defamation League to come and protect us?

LILITH: Do you think that Jewish women need to see men less as their allies and more as their enemies in order to be able to avoid rape?

BART: I don't think you have to have individual men as your enemies. What I think you have to do is have class consciousness. If you are Black, you do not have to think of individual whites as your enemies, but you just have to do an analysis of "in whose interest?" Now, we already have that analysis. We are told to ask,"Is it good for the Jews?" So what you have to ask is "Is it good for women?" And lots of stuff that's good for women is not good for men, not everything, and it is *not* true that in a rising sea, all boats rise. We know that, for example, development in the third-world countries has been lousy for women, in study after study. We know that the Renaissance was terrible for women. We know that the times of very high culture in Europe have not been good for Jews. Now we must ask, "What is good for me as a woman?" I certainly think to avoid rape, you have to consider many interactions as potentially adversarial. One must be on guard. One of the women said, "The streets are guerilla warfare."

Another thing is, I don't trust men of any group to help women avoid rape. The point is that if they teach you how to avoid rape, then you can avoid being raped by them. A Black woman psychiatrist pointed it out to me: because I couldn't understand why women got more support from their male significant others if they were raped than if they avoided rape, because avoiding rape is also a frightening experience, etcetera, and she said to me, "Well, first of all if you can do it without them, then it means that they're not that necessary to you. And secondly, if you can avoid with somebody else, you can avoid with them." It had never *occurred* to me. And I'm, you know, pretty cynical, and it hadn't occurred to me that it was not in their interest to have women learn how to avoid rape.

LILITH: Often Jewish women are extremely able to tolerate being put upon: in their families they're always worried about how their husbands and children are going to be feeling, that their own feelings will come last. Given this, it's especially interesting that you see the rage reaction as women's best protection. Has anything changed dramatically in Jewish women's lives to affect their self-esteem, and hence perhaps heighten the likelihood of their feeling rage when attacked?

BART: Mine was probably the last generation of Jewish women that had to deal with the unwillingness to get a divorce. Now I think there are still problems to the extent that women are expected to put up with men to meet their families' expectations. A lot of rape and forced sex done by husbands occurs, and you're expected to put up with that, or at least forced sex...Well, this doesn't do anything for your self-esteem, this is terrible.

There are a number of items I asked about that have to do with self-esteem and having role models in your life. For example, I had a question, "What women in public or private life do you admire and why?" Women who avoided rape were more likely to mention women that they knew personally in their private lives. Women who *were* raped were more likely to mention actresses or other public figures.

LILITH: So they had no strong role models close at hand?

BART: I thought that that was very interesting, given that Jewish women generally had a higher ratio of rape to avoidance. Think about what kind of woman will have a reaction of absolute outrage that somebody would dare do this to her. This is a woman who has a sense of who she is, and that she's somebody worthy, and that she owns her body. I think that one of the things that enables us to have that is to have our mothers be strong women who had a sense of who they were. Interestingly, the only social-class variable that seemed to predict rape avoidance was having a mother with post-graduate education, which we link to the daughter's sense of self-esteem.

Self-esteem is not simply an individual problem. We must change the consistent devaluation, subordination, objectification, impoverishment of women in our society so that high self-esteem is not a miracle but the normal outcome of a society free of male dominance.

Since pornography is a variable in producing the culture that makes rape acceptible, and desensitizes men to the harm of rape it is important, too, that we as Jewish women confront the involvement of Jewish men in pornography. Lawyers for *Playboy*, *Hustler*, and *Penthouse* are Jewish. Indeed it is a Jewish male lawyer who is defending *Hustler* against Jewish feminist Andrea Dworkin's libel suit. And it is Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz who has a regular column in *Penthouse* and who is representing them in their suit against the Justice Department. While Jews are not heads of these major slick magazines they are overrepresented among the smaller ones, e.g. Al Goldstein who puts out *Screw*.

Andrea Dworkin said to a Minneapolis synagogue, "we did not survive the Holocaust so this could be done to us." Not only is it a *"shandeh* for the *goyim*," it is an assault on *us*. Self-esteem for women, the factor associated with rape avoidance, doesn't come from the air. It comes from a society that makes it possible. And pornography is a factor in men's treating women in such a way as to diminish their sense of entitlement to basic rights.

Few women can avoid internalizing others' perception and treatment of us. And pornography diminishes our image, whether by latently encouraging sexual harassment of occupational groups (e.g., *Playboy's* issue on nurses) or by implying that rape produces only positive effects for women. We must make it clear to Jewish men that such behavior is unacceptable. Maimonides not only said that marital rape was impermissable but that one should not have intercourse with one's wife if one was even contemplating divorce. Pornography is *not* in the Jewish tradition.

LILITH: What, ultimately, are the most effective strategies against a rape?

BART: The most effective rape avoiders I couldn't even interview, because they had avoided the original threat. *They weren't worried about being thought paranoid.* One woman was waiting for the El in Chicago, and she noticed a guy across the platform. And then she saw him go down. And then she saw him come up on her side, and then she took off. She didn't say, "Well, maybe he thought he was going to the South Side, but he realized he had to go to the North Side." Well, maybe he did, but what does it hurt her to leave the scene? That's why self-esteem is important, because if you have very good self-esteem, you really don't care, when there's some stranger in the elevator, what he's going to think about you.

By the way, the very simple thing in the elevator that anybody can do is just to stand near the buttons. Other physical avoidance strategies that worked were yelling and screaming, fleeing or trying to flee. Taking advantage of environmental intervention. Multiple strategies—that means you keep using different strategies and keep doing what works.

But the best defense against rape seems to be strong self-esteem—the primary feeling that no creep is going to do this to you. ■

TSENA-RENA

ROSH CHODESH GROUPS

If you live in the Toronto area, you'll be glad to know there's a vibrant *Rosh Chodesh group* for women which meets regularly for the "3 Ss" - Sharing, Study and Song. The group also organizes weekend retreats. To participate, contact:

Hayzel Robinson
14 Elway Ct. #3
Toronto, Canada
416-667-3647
416-783-6351

A New York-based group of Jewish women "dedicated to celebrating the transformation in the cycles of our lives" meets each month to welcome and ritually commemorate the new moon. They are looking for new members to join them.

Rosh Chodesh group
Jewish Women's Resource Center
National Council of Jewish Women, New York Section
9 East 69 Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 535-5900, ext. 16

EVENTS

Ms. Liberty and Justice For All...Woman Rising in Resistance, a national network of feminist activities, is sponsoring the *Women Take Liberty* action at the Statue of Liberty on Sunday, August 3, 1986. The purpose of this event is, naturally, to celebrate the Statue's 100th anniversary, but also to honor the women of the world. For more information, write:

Mary Lee Sargent or Margaret Flowing Johnson
P.O. Box 2096, Station A
Champaign, IL 61820

An exhibition on "Changing Tradition: The Position of Women in Judaism" will run at Amsterdam's Jewish Historical Museum until December 1986. The show focuses on changes in synagogue life and other rituals, illustrated by objects and art designed by Jewish women.

Joods Historisch Museum
Waaggebouw
Nieuwmarkt 4
1012 CR Amsterdam

DRAMA & FILM

Actress Judith Goldsmith, in a solo presentation, *"To Life, To Light: A Celebration of the Human Spirit,"* portrays three remarkable Jewish women: Emma Lazarus, Judith, and Hannah Senesh. The production has received excellent reviews. For bookings:

The Penguin Players
17 Burton Avenue
Woodmere, N.Y. 11598
(516) 374-6899
(516) 374-6310

Performer Judy Sloan has created a humorous and moving theatre piece called *Sophie*. A composite of stories culled from Ms. Sloan's interviews with elderly Jews, *Sophie* has been travelling coast-to-coast for the past several years. The play is part of an ongoing project, "Preserving Jewish Theatre Through Oral Histories." For information on *Sophie's* schedule of appearances or how to order a video-cassette, contact:

Preserving Jewish Theatre Through Oral Histories
P.O. Box 1867
New Haven, CT 06508

The Women of Summer is a one-hour documentary which tells the compelling tale of the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers. During the years 1921-38, Bryn Mawr served 1,700 blue-collar students from the United States and Europe. As shown in their diaries and letters and oral histories, these women were astounded that an elite "girl's" school would teach factory workers with little education - and they were forever changed by the experience. *The Women of Summer*, produced by Suzanne Bauman and Rita Heller, and sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is available through the distributor:

Filmakers Library, Inc.
133 E. 58th St.
New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 355-6545

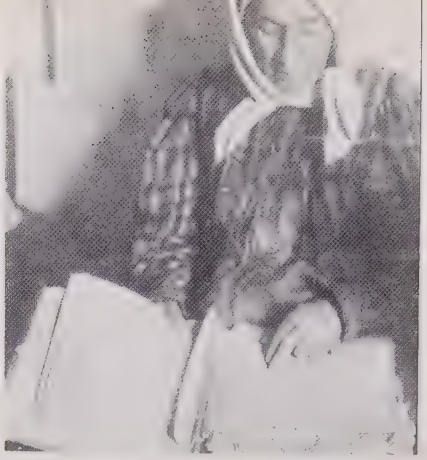
RATE IT X is a 95-minute documentary produced by lesbian feminists that takes a probing look at sexual dynamics in our society. The film is based on a series of sometimes revealing often disturbing, interviews with men who profit from the sexual depiction of women - be it in mainstream advertising or hardcore pornography.
For more information, write:

Claudette Charbonneau
Executive Producer
188 Feminore St.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225

PUBLICATIONS

If you're currently working and taking care of a family and at the same time thinking of going to college, here's a book just for you. *The College Board Guide to Going to College While Working: Strategies for Success* is designed to help women (and men) in this situation make informed decisions about college, and effectively juggle their time. For extra inspiration, the book includes case histories of adults who achieved their college goals while handling job/home responsibilities. To order, send $9.95 to:

College Board Publications
Dept. E15, Box 886
New York, N.Y. 10101



VIVO

"Go and See" or "Seek Enlightenment" is the title of the Yiddish-language Torah for women, with the portion of the week and folk tales. Tsena-Rena was the first resource that enabled women to educate themselves.

For a calendar and newsletter on Jewish women's activities, published by a group in the San Francisco Bay Area:

Jewish Women's Newsletter
2483 Hearst Ave., Suite 186
Berkeley, CA 94709

The National Council for Reseach on Women has published the funding report, *A Declining Federal Commitment to Research About Women, 1980-1984*, which compiles post-1980 data available from eight federal agencies. The survey reveals the significant decrease in federal funding for research concerning women. One alarming example: The National Institute of Mental Health's support for research about women dropped by almost $3 million between 1980 and 1982. For a copy of this report, send $6 to:

The National Council for Research on Women
The Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House
47-49 E. 65th St.
New York, N.Y. 10021

Anti-abortion activists continue to threaten the availability of safe, accesible abortions through systematic clinic bombings, harassments and disruptive protest activities. Recognizing the need for safeguards, the American Civil Liberties Union has published a guide called *"Preserving The Right to Choose: How to Cope With Violence & Disruption at Abortion Clinics."* This pamphlet, particularly geared toward clinic personnel, describes ways to protect abortion services. To order, send $2.00 to:

The American Civil Liberties Union
132 West 43rd St.
New York, N.Y. 10036

A triple treat from Biblio Press. First, *The Political Life of American Jewish Women* by Susan Welch, Ph.D. and Fred Ulrich. This paperback book analyzes how Jewish women voted between 1978-1982, and how these votes compare to those of Jewish men and Protestant and Catholic women. It also highlights several important Jewish women in 20th century politics. (Biblio also sells posters and postcards of notable Jewish women—Among them Emma Lazarus and Ernestine Rose.)

Also just published, *Sex and the Modern Jewish Woman*, a unique bibliography/guide where a dozen aspects of sexuality are discussed and analyzed. This report includes published and unpublished works, papers and surveys, and is sure to benefit scholars, students, and persons active in Jewish communal work and women's organizations. Supplementing the bibliography are overview essays.

And if you've ever thought about starting a Jewish women's library, but didn't know where to begin, Biblio Press' guide will answer all your questions. The booklet covers library policies, acquisitions, public relations and more. Send SASE to:

Biblio Press
P.O. Box 22
Fresh Meadows, N.Y. 11365
(718) 361-3141

The Women's League for Conservative Judaism has published a new edition of a *Shabbat Manual* which describes, in nonsexist terms, the basics of Sabbath observance in the home and synagogue. Stereotype gender roles, such as Mother Cooking and Cleaning for Shabbos, have been eliminated. The manual includes sections on history, synagogue observance and Oneg Shabbat and recommends books for further study. To order, send $3.00 plus $1.50 postage & handling.

Welcome to The World: A Jewish Baby's Record Book is also just out from the Women's League. This book, sure to be a keepsake, reflects current Jewish lifestyles, such as the mother participating in religious rituals and the father actively raising the child. Each 40-page, hardcover edition of *Welcome to The World* comes with a gift-card. Contact the Women's League for more information.

The Women's League for Conservative Judaism
48 E. 74th St.
New York, N.Y. 10021

A new Hillel prayerbook for the High Holy Days, *"Ma-aley Tefillot"* (On Wings of Awe), seeks to fulfill the needs of nondenominational services and remove "some of the more blatant sexism" common to such prayerbooks. For example, the Lord is cited not only as God of our Fathers, but also as God of our Mothers. To order, send $9.95 to:

B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation
1640 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Artist and scribe Peggy Davis has combined Hebrew and English calligraphy to create one-of-a-kind "Mazel Tov" and "Shalom" greeting cards and Chanukah postcards. Ms. Davis has also produced beautiful lithographs of the Oath of Maimonides, Sabbath Blessings and other Jewish prayers. For a brochure:

Peggy H. Davis
Calligraphy
Suite 144
3249 Hennepin Ave., S.
Minneapolis, Mn. 55408

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Program for the Study of Women & Men in Society at the University of S. California is seeking material on *Jewishness and Masculinity*. Contributions may be in the form of essays, fiction, poetry, graphics or media reviews. Suggested topics include any aspect of the interactions between Jewish and male identities (religious or secular) in areas such as work, money, family, sexuality, intellectualism etc. Of special interest is the impact of feminism on Jewish men. Selected submissions will be published in the volume "Changing Men: issues in Gender, Sex & Politics" during spring, 1987. These entries and others will subsequently be printed in book form. Send material to:

Harry Brod
Program for the Study of Women & men in Society
Taper Hall 331M
University of S. California
Los Angeles, Ca. 90089

MONEY

There's no such things as a free lunch, but if you're an industrious Jewish college student or campus group in a funds crunch, you can apply for a grant from the North American Jewish Students Appeal. Grants of up to $500 will be given to support local or regional Jewish projects, such as student publications, conferences, organizations and local action groups. Applications for funding are reviewed throughout the year, and must include: a description of the activity; and list of income and expenses. For more information, contact:

Roberta Shiffman
Executive Director
North American Jewish Student Appeal
15 E. 26th St.
Suite 1350
New York, N.Y. 10010
(212) 679-2293

LIBRARIES

The New York office of Chamah, the International Soviet Jewish Aid Society, has acquired a fine collection of Jewish books in the Russian language and opened a lending library. The books include many published by Chamah, the Aliyah Department of the Jewish Agency, Western Jewish publishers and contributions from recent immigrants. Previously inaccessible to the Russian reader, these volumes will now be available through mail and the main Chamah office. For catalogues and more information, contact:

Chamah
78 Pearl St.
New York, N.Y. 10275
(212) 943-9690

An extraordinarily useful collection of material relating to the State of Israel is housed in the Zionist Archives and Library in New York. Here are more than 50,000 books in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, French, German and Russian, plus over 400 periodicals from around the world (including all magazines and newspapers published in Israel). Its folk music to recordings of political speeches and legislative hearings on the Middle East, and the visual aids department houses over 50,000 photos (dating back to the 1880's), along with contemporary filmstrips and slides.

The Zionist Archives and Library
515 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 752-0600, ext. 255, 256

TAKE BACK THE WATERS:

A FEMINIST RE-APPROPRIATION OF MIKVAH

by Rabbi Elyse M. Goldstein

There we were, a strange-looking group: four of my closest women friends naked and singing, splashing around with glee. I would dunk into the water, come up, and hear a beautiful wish, or a poem, or a prayer. The water was sweet and warm, and my tears flowed and mixed with it. For this was my night as a Kallah, a Jewish bride, and I was in the mikvah.

As a feminist I have struggled with the Jewish menstrual taboos for many years. Leviticus 25 prohibits a menstruating woman from touching her husband or even his things for seven days; while at the same time it proscribes her husband from even sitting on the same chair upon which she has sat. This period of seven days legislated by the Torah was later extended by the rabbis who added yet another seven. Today's apologists often quote the Talmudic text (Niddah 66a) which insists that "the women themselves added more stringency" to the already existing law. In wondering why women would do such, a cynic might suggest that the women of Talmudic times disliked their husbands sexually and wanted an extra seven days of "privacy." More likely, the rabbis insisted on the added days but ascribed the desire to women to convince them that they themselves should want it that way. The third possibility is the most interesting and least likely, in my opinion: that the rabbis actually acquiesced to the power of collective women legislating for themselves. I find it improbable, judging by the way the rabbis described women's bodies and psyches, that women themselves actually ever entered into the debate on menstruation and its ramifications upon Jewish life. Furthermore, if this is true, it establishes a precedent for women to legislate halacha for themselves today.

Why the additional days? Why the mikvah at all? Is this simply a male revulsion toward the power of the female body; or is it, as some would suggest, the "whisper of death" within woman from which she must be cleansed in order to return to the fold. For in truth, every time a woman menstruates she loses the lining of her uterus which would have housed a child; and Judaism has always seen the dead as a source of defilement. (For instance, a Cohen may not go near a corpse.) This cleansing from the "whisper of death" is not a sexist reaction to menstruation, some would argue; rather it is a spiritual and deep understanding of the female biological process.

However we look at it, there can be no doubt that the mikvah has been tied to menstruation since the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent end of

Elyse Goldstein is Assistant Rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. She is active in Jewish feminist causes, and is a founding member of Toronto Women of Faith (an interfaith women's clergy group). She hopes to one day generate enough interest in the feminist community to build an "alternative" mikvah along the lines proposed in the article.

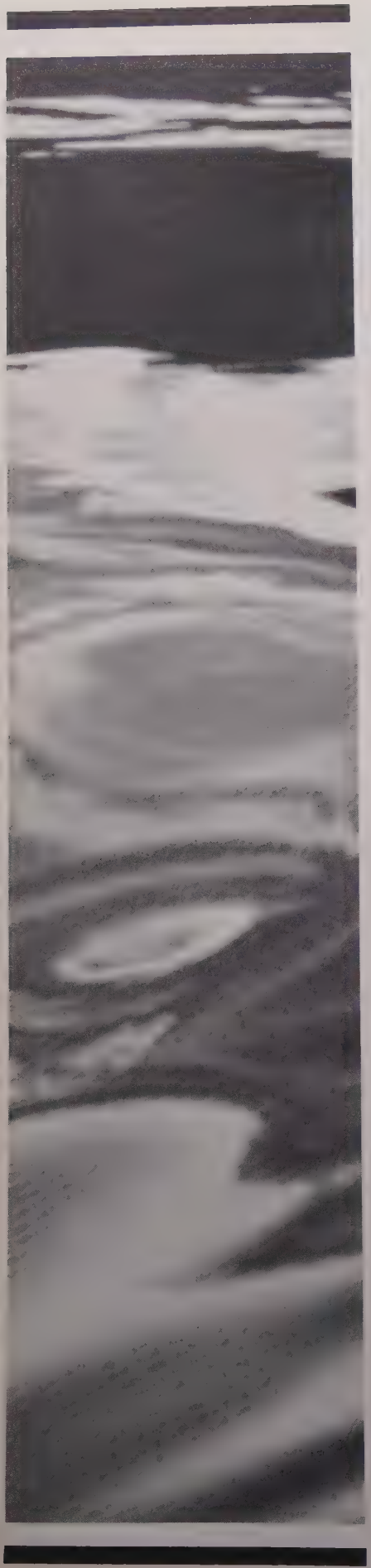


PHOTO COURTESY ESTELLE RUBIN

other types of "impurities." Therefore, while men may occasionally go to mikvah to prepare for Shabbat or festivals, or even, among the ultra-observant, after an involuntary nocturnal emission, they are never predictably and cyclically in need of cleansing. For men, mikvah is non-obligatory and going is an act usually unconnected to their biologies or their marital status. Add to this the dirty and dark atmosphere of mikvaot in poor immigrant neighborhoods when our mothers grew up, fostering in them a fear and loathing of the whole process which we have inherited. Now add the English Biblical translation of a menstruating woman as "unclean" or "impure." Add our grandmother's "meises" about not touching a Torah during that time of month. (This has absolutely no *halachic* basis. R. Yehudah ben Batera in Tractate Brachot and also the Tosefta of Brachot (22a) state that a menstruating woman may even go up to the Torah. A Torah scroll is supra-holy: it is too holy to be defiled by any person or any object at all.) Then add one more piece of fuel to the fire: that mikvah has been the domain of married women only. It is inexorably linked to having a husband, to making oneself ready to return to sexual relations with one's male partner, to being connected to a man. Divorced and single women, even though menstruating, are not to go to mikvah, according to tradition—because no matter how we try to skirt the issue, no matter how we rewrite history or remake images, the bottom line is that mikvah is seen as the last necessary step before resuming sexual relations within a heterosexual marriage, a step commanded by God. Any other reason for going—to spiritually renew oneself after one's cycle, to cleanse from this "whisper of death," to link oneself to Jewish women's history, to reground after feeling crampy and bloated—all these are lovely, interesting and unique. But according to tradition these reasons are ultimately secondary and even superfluous. All of these factors add up to a great deal of resentment toward the mikvah among modern women.

Why then was I, a Reform rabbi and committed feminist, splashing around in the mikvah? Was I going to make myself "kosher" for my new husband? Hardly. For me, it was an experience of reappropriation. The mikvah has been taken from me as a Jewish woman by sexist interpretations, by my experiences with Orthodox "family purity" committees who run communal mikvaot as Orthodox monopolies, by a history of male biases, fears of menstruation and superstitions. I was going to take back the water.

To take back the water means to see mikvah as a wholly female experience: as Miriam's well gave water to the Israelites so too will the mikvah give strength back to Jewish women. Water is the symbol of birth—now it can be a symbol of rebirth. To take back the water means to open the mikvah up to women not attached to men. In order to do that we may have to build alternative mikvaot, run by women, for women, following women's rules, not funded or run "behind the scenes" by male rabbis with family purity laws or their own denominational terrorities to protect. To take back the waters means to dip on Rosh Chodesh, when the moon and the sea and women's cycles become one. To take back the water means to open the mikvah during the day, so women don't have to sneak in under cover of darkness. (If we aren't ashamed of our bodies, why do we need to hide our immersions? If we reject the notion that mikvah is only for the right to resume sex with our husbands, we won't have to be modest about going.) To take back the water means to turn the mikvah into a Jewish women's center: with Torah learning and books available, maybe even feminist shiurim, not just sheitl advertisements and pamphlets on keeping a kosher home.

But why bother at all to take back the water? Why not simply abandon an institution which has been used to debase us? Because we have so little that is ours. We put on a *tallis* but in doing so we share a man's ritual garb. The water is ours: it is the fluid of our own bodies and a deeply moving experience of connection to Mother Earth. We climb the top of Masada in Israel and there we see a mikvah. It is our Jewish history.

So there we were: washing away past relationships, past hurts. As we prepared, we sang; one friend washed my hair, another rubbed my feet. When I entered the water, they all entered with me. I began with a chant: May my *tevilah* (immersion) cleanse me of past wrongs...May it cleanse me of grudges toward past loves...May it cleanse me of pain from past loves...May it cleanse me of the times I have hurt past loves...May it move me in the future...May my *tevilah* connect me to other women... May it strengthen my committment to women's causes...May it bring out the goodness of woman in me. I dipped and sang out the traditional blessing, not meekly and with arms covering my breasts as the attendant would have liked, but in a clear, loud song. And I dipped again and again, saying "Amen, May it be Your will," as each friend offered her prayer, her wish for my future life. The attendant grew weary of what she thought were antics—yet we continued in this deeply spiritual vein long after she had left. It was a moment which inspired me. It was a moment I shall never forget. It was a moment of taking back what was mine a long time ago, offering a new wisdom of the water which can be uplifting for all women. ■

'MY CHILDREN ARE DISAPPEARED'

AN ARGENTINE MOTHER'S STORY

By Aviva Cantor

Renee Epelbaum has lost her three children—two sons and a daughter—and she still does not know how they died. Or why.

They did not perish in an accident of nature—earthquake, fire or flood—or of human error—car or plane crash. Nor did they succumb to an epidemic or virulent disease.

They were murdered in cold blood by a regime whose avowed purpose was to "cleanse" the country of "ideological criminals"—meaning, those suspected of disagreeing with its brand of fascism.

This was not Nazi Germany and this was not 1938 or 1944. The crime occurred in Argentina, during the military junta's reign of terror: 1976 to 1983. And the victims of this long night of carnage and butchery were the desaparecidos, "disappeared persons"—Argentina's contribution to the 20th century's constantly expanding museum of horrors.

These 9,300 (officially documented) to 30,000 (estimated) desaparecidos—Epelbaum's children among them—were pulled from their beds at gunpoint in the dead of night by the "security forces," snatched off the streets, from bus-stops and cafes into unmarked cars, hauled off from their offices and dinner tables. Never heard from again, they have no individual graves, not even unmarked ones. Their bodies were thrown into the sea and rivers from helicopters, burned to ashes in crematoria, and cast, mutilated and dismembered, into lime pits.

The victims of the junta's pre-planned campaign included not only leftists and political activists, but also pacifists, trade unionists, people in the professions of sociology, psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis (considered fundamentally subversive) and teachers, students, journalists, doctors and nurses—individuals who, in the words of then-President Jorge Rafael Videla "spread ideas that are contrary to Western civilization."

They also include spouses, relatives, friends, and colleagues of disappeared persons, and 115 children of desaparecidos, some born in concentration camps *(see related story in these pages).*

The dawn of democracy in Argentina has brought no end to the nightmare of agony of the relatives of the desaparecidos.

Since the reign of terror began in March 1976, a group of women has been marching every Thursday in front of the Presidential Palace in Buenos Aires to demand an accounting on the fate of their disappeared children. They are known as the "Madres," the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

In April 1976, scarcely a month after the military coup that brought the junta to power, the Madres, originally 14 in number, began gathering at the Plaza in silent vigil. Mostly middle-aged and elderly women with no political background, the Madres risked their own lives to challenge the regime at a time when such courage was in very short supply.

Originally referred to as "las locas," the crazy women, the Madres were often spat upon and insulted. Eleven parents of desaparecidos and two French nuns who were meeting with them were themselves abducted in December 1977. As public protest mounted after the defeat of Argentina in the Faulkland Islands war, the Madres were joined by hundreds of other Argentine citizens. The Madres thus became the midwives of a movement which contributed to the restoration of democracy in Argentina.

Renee Epelbaum is one of the founding leaders of the Madres. She is the only Jew among the six mothers and one grandmother who testify in a recently released documentary, "Las Madres: the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo," which premiered this spring at the Film Forum in New York. [The film was produced and directed by Lourdes Portillo and Susana Munoz, an Argentine-born Jew who was active in a Zionist youth movement in her city (she is still leery about revealing its name or her own birth name), and lived in Israel from 1972-1979.]

Epelbaum, a gray-haired widow in her 60's, describes herself as a pacifist. Neither she nor her late husband, an importer (she still runs the family business), were ever "involved politically," but "we talked a lot about human rights," she said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency during a recent visit to New York in connection with the film.

Her three children were kidnapped in 1977, she said. Luis, who had been a medical student concerned about his country's poor, was kidnapped in August, 1977, at the age of 25. The younger children—Claudio, then 23, and Lila, then 20, were abducted three months later from Uruguay (the security forces of the two countries cooperated in the battle against "subversion"). Their mother had sent them there in a vain attempt to try to ensure their safety.

Aviva Cantor is a founding editor of *Lilith*. The research, including interviews, cited in this article formed the basis of her three-part series, "A Nightmare Continues in Argentina," in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin, May 21-23, 1986.

In the beginning, she said, when people asked, "Were your children involved in anything?" she got angry because "This is a question of justice. Nobody should be kidnapped and made to disappear even if they *were* involved politically."

She tells this story about Luis: One day he came home from the hospital where he was working, with a "sad face." Epelbaum asked him why he was sad and he replied: "I won't be useful to the people with my career, because people come to the hospital, we cure them, and after two months they come back because they can't afford to buy the food or medicine they need."

Claudio, she said, was a poet and a musician. He was studying law "so he could defend people who were taken because of their political beliefs." As a child, she said, he would be constantly putting his shoes on the wrong feet and his gloves on the wrong hands: "How dangerous could he be?"

Lila, she said, "was not involved in anything, not active in any way," she said. But she sympathized with the oppressed, "she wanted justice, she wanted people to be able to live a decent life."

After the three children were kidnapped, Epelbaum's home was ransacked five times by the security forces. They even took the photos she had kept of her children. Like many other Madres, she had snapshots made from the ID cards of her children, which she carries with her.

THE MADRES BECAME THE MIDWIVES OF A MOVEMENT WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN ARGENTINA.

The Madres demanded the junta disclose the desaparecidos' fate.

In the beginning, said Epelbaum, it was "not easy to overcome fear." Fear, like sickness, "comes quick but goes slowly," she said, quoting her mother-in-law. "When every day someone is taken, it takes time to recover courage." But the Madres were motivated by desperation, by their love for their children, she said.

With no place to meet other than the Plaza, the Madres would often go to churches, as if they were going there to pray. They also met in people's homes, hers among them. Later, as the film shows, the Madres, with financial support from abroad, found a regular place to meet.

An estimated 10 per cent of the desparecidos were Jews—a proportion significantly higher than the Jews' one-and-a-quarter per cent in the population. Entire chapters and all the local emissaries of Hashomer Hatzair, the Socialist Zionist youth movement, disappeared. Most of the counselors and almost the entire youth movement in Cordoba disappeared.

"The Jews were not kidnapped because they were Jews, but it helped," Epelbaum said. A similar charge was made, in 1983, by Luis Haimovitz, father of an abducted and murdered daughter, Alexandra [see LILITH */Kol Ishah*, #8] and head of an Israeli committee of relatives of disappeared persons.

The security forces, Epelbaum continued, "were more suspicious of Jews. For them, every Jew must be a Communist." Both she and Haimovitz said that swastikas were daubed by the kidnappers on the door of one family's home after their two sons were abducted and made to disappear.

The military junta, she said, was "deeply anti-Semitic." Prof. Edy Kaufman of the Hebrew University, a former Argentinian who was then the only Israeli member of Amnesty International's international executive, said in a 1981 interview with the Canadian Jewish News, that there were many officers in the security forces who held virulent anti-Jewish views. "Some of them were trained by German officers before

World War II, and they assumed Jews are leftists and subversives. Some genuinely believed in a world Jewish conspiracy which sought to create a second Jewish state in southern Argentina."

The security forces, for reasons known only to them and as yet undisclosed, separated the individuals they seized into two groups: desaparecidos, taken to secret concentration camps and considered non-persons; and prisoners, whose incarceration was acknowledged officially.

Prisoners who were released, among them publisher Jacobo Timerman, reported that the Jewish prisoners received three or four times the measure of physical and mental torture as non-Jews. This has been documented and substantiated by Hebe Pastor de Bonafini, president of the Madres, by Amnesty International, and most recently, by Nobel Peace Prize Winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, who was himself imprisoned and tortured for 14 months.

After the Holocaust, "No Jewish community in the world suffered numerically as much, since the days of the Stalinist oppression against Soviet Jews," as has Argentine Jewry, said Kaufman. In 1981, when the junta was still in power, he said in an interview that the Jewish community was living "in a state of absolute fear."

The Jewish community, traumatized by the reign of terror, now seeks—like the majority of Argentinians—to put the past behind it. Many Jews fear that disinterring the human rights atrocities might jeopardize the fragile democracy headed by President Raul Alfonsin.

The community, however, is still rent by bitter conflict over what its leadership did and did not do for the victims of the terror—the prisoners, and in particular, the desaparecidos.

In March 1984, at a heated public meeting of the Congress of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Argentina, there was bitter criticism of those who had headed the community during the terror for their failure to take effective actiion to save Jewish lives.

Epelbaum charged in her interview with JTA that the DAIA (the central body of Argentine Jewry) was not active in intervening with the authorities on behalf of the desaparecidos. Amplifying on a statement to that effect that she had made in the film, Epelbaum said:

"When the disappearances began in 1976, the DAIA did nothing—I don't know if they were fearful or simply didn't think it was convenient." Having learned of a change in policy, she met with DAIA leaders and was told they had presented the Minister of Interior and Gen. Videla with a list of 90 names of kidnapped young Jews. The generals had promised to respond to the DAIA and when they did, she was told, the DAIA would submit another such list.

Epelbaum charged that shortly after Marcos, the son of then-DAIA president Nehemias Resnizky, was kidnapped in July 1977—and released after four days—"the DAIA stopped their commitment to this problem." Many people, she said, believed both acts were related. "Why his son and not mine?" was the pained reaction of many Jewish parents.

Marcos was hauled off by 12 armed men from Resnizky's home in the dead of night. He was brutally interrogated about "Zionist plotting" and "international Jewish conspiracies." His father was able to intercede with the Interior Minister, Gen. Harguindeguy, and secure Marcos' release.

Resnizky has vehemently denied the charges of inaction, insisting that the DAIA continued to present lists of Jewish desaparecidos to the government throughout the junta's rule. The DAIA, in an official document dated January 1984 (long after Resnizky's term of office was over), stated that from the beginning, it had regularly intervened with the government on behalf of the abducted Jews, sometimes delivering lists on a weekly basis.

The community, the document stated, understood Marcos' kidnapping as "a real and direct aggression against (Argentine) Jewry and its leaders" and as an attempt to intimidate Resnizky, who therefore immediately sent Marcos and his two other children to Israel. The document mentions various interventions, the continued lack of response to them by the authorities—but success in gaining the release of only one desaparecido, Marcos, and six prisoners. "People were furious about that document—they considered it shameful," said Epelbaum.

The Jewish Committee on Human Rights, founded by Rabbi Marshall Meyer and others in 1981, believes the DAIA could have acted more forcefully to protest the disappearances. Meyer served until recently as the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth El of Buenos Aires—from whose Conservative pulpit he denounced the human rights atrocities every Friday night—was a founding member of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, and visited prisoners in jail. "Once when visiting a prison I was told that if I didn't get out immediately, I'd go out in a box," he said in a 1984 interview with the *Detroit Jewish News*.

Epelbaum says that Meyer regularly came to the Plaza de Mayo to meet with the Madres regarding cases of desaparecidos, and "gave comfort to mothers who were suffering." There was a group of about ten to 20 Jewish mothers who went quite often to his synagogue to ask his advice, she said.

Meyer, in a recent interview in New York, where he now serves as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, acknowledged that the DAIA did intervene in some cases, although many times its leaders simply told parents of desparecidos that there was nothing that could be done for them.

The DAIA, he said, "should have spoken out in terms of human rights, because human rights are a basic authentic concern of Judaism; this is not a political concern. They did not condemn human rights violations. They said (Jewish) life is going on normally, Zionist activities are permitted, the schools are open.

"It would have been better had they said, 'This is the darkest period of Argentine history. Murders are being committed every day—of our Christian brothers, our Jewish brothers, of atheists, of human beings. Human beings are being murdered daily'. I didn't hear that statement from them."

The DAIA's 1984 document states that it adhered to the principle of "the defense of the...dignity of the Jews and its permanent fight against anti-Semitism in all its forms...During the agitated period of violence and repression, the development of the institutional life in the country was assured without restrictions or conditions."

"IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD THEY SAID, 'THIS IS THE DARKEST PERIOD OF ARGENTINE HISTORY.'"

Epelbaum condemned the statements by the DAIA that Jewish communal life was normal during the terror adding, "They tried to make the junta look like good people. The junta showed (these statements) as proof of their honesty; that if the DAIA said they were good people, the protests (against them) were false."

She also charged that the DAIA had opposed—and thus prevented—Jewish organizations abroad, particularly World Jewish Congress affiliates, from expressing concern about the human rights atrocities in Argentina during the reign of terror.

She told JTA that when she visited the

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LAS MADRES: THE MOTHERS OF PLAZA DE MAYO
XOCHIL FILM PRODUCTIONS, SAN FRANCISCO

U.S. in late 1978, early 1979 to rally support for the Madres, she asked leaders involved with the WJC to express such concern. She was told that they could not do so because of WJC policy that if the affiliate in a particular country opposed such intervention, others elsewhere "couldn't say a word." She was told the same thing in Canada, and later, in France, she said.

Meyer said that he had been present at a meeting in New York in 1980 or 1981 at which DAIA leaders told those of American Jewish organizations that they did not want anyone "interfering in Argentine affairs." They told American Jews "not to get involved" with the human rights violations in Argentina in general or those against Jews in particular, he said.

The effect of the DAIA's opposition to such statements by Jewish organizations outside Argentina was pernicious, said Epelbaum: "such statements could have saved lives." The junta was concerned about its economic and political relations with the U.S. "They had enough (trouble) with the charges that they were criminals and kidnappers. They did not want to be charged with being anti-Semitic.

THE FACT REMAINS THAT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ADL, NO JEWISH ORGANIZATION IN AMERICA CONDUCTED A MAJOR CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF ARGENTINE JEWISH PRISONERS AND AND DESAPARECIDOS—OR IN PROTEST AGAINST ALL HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES IN THAT COUNTRY.

"The junta believed that the Jewish community had influence in the U.S. and Canada, and the world in general, so they tried to be supported by the DAIA so that nobody, particularly in the U.S.—the 'Jewish lobby'—would say anything against them."

Charles Zaionz, Epelbaum's Canadian cousin who chairs the Canadian Jewish Congress' International Affairs Committe, said in a telephone interview that CJC officials requested a meeting with the Argentine ambassador following Epelbaum's visit to North America. After being kept waiting for over a month, they were shown a government-made film in which Resnizky and two of his colleagues stated that Jewish life in Argentina was normal.

CJC executive director Alan Rose stated in a telephone interview that DAIA leaders had cautioned that any representations to the Argentine government about the concerns of Canadians over human rights violations there "should be made quietly." The impression they conveyed, he said, was that if such statements are made publicly, more people would disappear, and that "every time such a statement is made publicly, another person is murdered."

The CJC, he continued, realized it should "not be heroes in someone else's back yard" and was careful "not to embarrass the Jewish community in Argentina (out of) fear that there would be consequences." He refused to go into any details as to what the CJC had done on behalf of Jewish desaparecidos and prisoners, but Zaionz said the body had made representations on their behalf to the Canadian government, which then queried the Argentine authorities.

Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of the Latin American Affairs Department of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and of its Argentine Prisoner Project during the reign of terror, does not accept the concept that the Jewish community of Argentina, or the prisoners or desaparecidos, were endangered by pressures from abroad. On the contrary, Rosenthal says, "outside pressures were very helpful" and were instrumental in getting some prisoners, including Timerman, released.

"The most effective thing to do when a person disappeared," he said, was to "make noise quickly" and get Argentine officials to declare and acknowledge that he or she was a prisoner. This prevented the individual from "being disappeared" permanently, as happened with the many thousands whose kidnapping and incarceration in the 340 secret concentration camps—and subsequent murder—were never officially acknowledged.

Rosenthal was also quoted by the *Jewish Frontier* in September 1981 as saying that he had received no aid at all from the Argentine Jewish leadership when he was attempting to draw up a list of Jewish prisoners. Rosenthal created the Prisoner Project anyway—relatives came to the ADL with names—and, said Epelbaum, "tried to help prisoners, spoke out" and publicized what was going on in no uncertain terms.

Israel Singer, secretary general of the WJC, emphasized that the DAIA was "not a monolith." Some DAIA leaders, "not all," he said, cautioned the WJC against speaking out but "this did not put a damper on us." He said WJC president Edgar Bronfman spoke out very forcefully against the junta as a regime Jews could not accept when he attended the 1981 meeting of the Latin American Jewish Congress in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and in interviews with Argentine newspapers—over DAIA protests.

Singer did acknowledge, however, that Jewish communities outside Argentina "might have been more vociferous if they (the DAIA) had encouraged us."

"EVERY PRESSURE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PLACED ON EVERY MAJOR POWER OF STATE TO STOP THE CARNAGE."

But the fact remains that, with the exception of the ADL, no Jewish organization in America conducted a major campaign on behalf of Argentine Jewish prisoners and desaparecidos—or in protest against all human rights atrocities in that country. None gave political or financial support to the Madres. And this was a time when American Jews were openly and publicly struggling on behalf of Soviet Jews—who, while denied cultural, religious and emigration rights, were not being murdered on a daily basis.

This was a time, too, when American Jewry seemed to be trying to come to

Of the 115 children who disappeared—many given to supporters of the regime for adoption, as in the Oscar-winning film "The Official Story"—ten are Jewish. One of the grandmothers who is still seeking her grandson is Rosa Tarlovski Rosenblik of Buenos Aires. Her eight-month pregnant daughter, Patricia Perez, was kidnapped in 1978.

According to Rosenblik, men in civilian clothes seized her daughter and her then-15-month-old granddaughter. The child was released to the grandparents several hours later. A man who did not identify himself phoned and said her daughter will be freed in a year or half-year as the charges against her are not serious, and that when the baby was born it will be brought to the grandparents. Patricia, who was in her last year at medical school, was not active in politics—she just opposed the regime.

Rosenblik later told the Canadian Jewish News that she found out from someone who was in a concentration camp with Patricia that she gave birth to a boy named Rodolfo on November 15, 1978. Neither she nor the child have been heard from or about since then.

some understanding of the abandonment of European Jewry during the Holocaust by the American and British governments and by their own leadership. The lesson of that tragedy was not applied to its policy and action in the case of Argentina.

The DAIA, in its 1984 document, makes only one reference to this issue. It states that on June 5, 1978 it received a note from the Interior Minister "in which he made some complaints about the campaign waged abroad, including Israel, against Argentine authorities" while actually "Argentine Jewry was specially careful in criticizing anything even of little importance that affected the Jews in Argentina."

Jewish observers familiar with Argentina have expressed the view that the DAIA's prime motivation for all its behavior during the reign of terror was fear for the fate of the entire community in that country, which has a long history of anti-Semitism. Perhaps, said Kaufman at the time, they feared an interventionist stance by them might trigger pogroms. Some leaders felt Jews on the left jeopardized the well-being of the community and that those abducted "must have done something wrong," and the community should not identify with them.

Meyer believes the DAIA was motivated partly by fear and partly by the belief that "if they didn't make waves the disappeared people would possibly come back" alive. But, he said, "this complicity of silence is precisely what (benefits) a fascist dictatorship."

The DAIA's rather successful effort to muzzle Jews abroad, said Meyer, was "a fatal error. Every pressure should have been placed on every major power of state to stop the carnage."

Epelbaum said that upon return from her visit to North America, she wrote the DAIA a "very respectful letter" saying she was "not judging their attitude—perhaps they had a reason (for it)" but asking them not to interfere with statements by other communities "because they could help."

Epelbaum signed the letter, giving her address and phone number, as did many other Jewish women who went with her to deliver it to the DAIA. They were told it would be read, she said, but "the DAIA never called or wrote."

Later in 1979, the DAIA issued an official report, presented at a meeting, stating they had received the letter and "didn't know who was behind it—as if I wrote it because someone with political interests (had) instructed me."

The group of Jewish women then wrote a second letter, which was never answered or acknowledged either. The letter said, "there was no one inspiring us, it was our own despair, our own love for our children."

Epelbaum said that the attitude of the Jewish community of Argentina was "very upsetting to me, very sad and painful." It was not only the Jewish community that did not do the right thing. Only three of the 83 Roman Catholic bishops supported the Madres. "But, as a Jew, (in the light of) the Jewish tradition, we expected a different attitude."

The Madres, she said, are still marching in the Plaza de Mayo because "we still haven't gotten the answer as to what happened to most of the children" and because all the criminals have not been punished. Only the top military leaders were put on trial; the rest "still walk freely on the streets." She concluded:

"We can't close our eyes and (act) as if nothing happened. As a Jew, you must remember the Holocaust. You must remind people what happened so it will not be repeated. (Here, too) we need justice to prevent this from recurring. And memory must be kept so we will never have this kind of nightmare again." ■

" WE NEED JUSTICE TO PREVENT THIS FROM RECURRING. AND MEMORY MUST BE KEPT SO WE WILL NEVER HAVE THIS KIND OF NIGHTMARE AGAIN."

While Israel's official policy with regard to victims of the terror in Argentina was shaped by several factors—its relationship with Argentina and its concern about jeopardizing the fate of the community there—its unofficial policy involved secret rescue work.

During this entire period, Israel sold arms to Argentina. Said Renee Epelbaum, a leader of the Madres, of this: "Everyone sell weapons to dictators. But didn't they know they were helping the dictatorship stay in power? What would they have thought if someone sold weapons to Hitler to help him stay in power?"

While "well-placed" sources stressed that the arms deals were not a consideration in Israel's policy on the Jewish desaparecidos and prisoners, they said that the attitude of the Argentine and other South American Jewish communities was a prime factor, according to a JTA report in 1983.

The attitude they conveyed was that the desaparecidos were not a "Jewish problem," and that focussing attention on the Jewish dimension of the issue was dangerous. "If they had wanted us to shout, we would have shouted," the Israeli sources said.

The Israeli Foreign Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, when he visited Buenos Aires in 1982, submitted a list of 340 names of disappeared Jews. The government provided some information on 33 which, Shamir later told the Argentine ambassador, was insufficient.

The Israeli government also asked about 10 political prisoners, eight of whom were subsequently released.

Shamir was criticized by Knesset members of all political shades in July 1983 for not doing enough on behalf of the Jewish desaparecidos. Later that year, six Argentine immigrants—among them lawyers Luis and Ilana Haimovitz, parents of the murdered Alexandra—appealed to the Supreme Court to order the Israeli government to help them obtain information on their missing relatives.

At the same time, however, Israel's ambassadors in Argentina were helping to get people out of the country. Ambassador Ram Nirgad, who served until 1980 (he later died of cancer), ran a latter-day "underground railroad" for Jews at risk.

Rabbi Marshall Meyer described the operation: when a Jew was kidnapped, the next thing the security forces would do was get hold of his or her address book and seize all her or his friends and acquaintances. Nirgad and his people quickly compiled a list of these names when someone disappeared.

"We went from door to door, from house to house," he said, "persuading parents to let their children go with us." Nirgad and his staff, he said, "worked tirelessly day and night and saved hundreds of Jews."

Dov Schmorak, who served as Israeli ambassador from 1980-1985, told the JTA in 1985 that he and the DAIA made secret arrangements with the government and security forces, who would let certain prisoners go if the Israelis would take them out.

The Israelis often went in the middle of the night to the prisons, took the released Jews to the airport, and got them out of the country. They rescued several hundred Jewish prisoners this way.

PAMELA SHIPLEY

LEAVING

by Toby Mostysser

Saturday mornings Faegie's bones would ache. From the luxury of half sleep she could attend to the accumulated ache of the week's hard labor, of a lifetime of suffering, that infused her limbs almost like a pleasant warmth, except where the rheumatism twisted and tortured her toes and fingers. It was familiar, homey pain, like the cry of babies or the touch of her husband, and she couldn't imagine life without it.

For years now, every weekday since they bought the first shop, the alarm would pull her out of bed like the whistle for *appel*. Summer and winter, rain or shine, she would splash water on her face, wake the children and send them off to school, fed, clothed and fully polished, gulp down a bitter cup of coffee, wedge cheese or salami between slices of rye bread for lunch and, since they bought the car a few years ago, push the keys into the ignition and drive to the shop like a *musselman* looking out of a trance—until she pulled aside the heavy door, and the noise of the sewing machines and the calls of the people competing for her attention, and often enough 'Sheya's complaint, "Couldn't you get here any earlier? It's eight o'clock. Half the morning's gone, and the shop is swimming away without you," brought her, so to speak, alive again.

But Saturdays were different. They were so quiet, so peaceful. No alarm shocked her body and soul into unnatural motion. No one forced her to rush about like an automaton forgetful that she had a self. She would awaken slowly, to the light that filtered through the curtains and to the pure sensation of starched sheets tense against her skin. With half-open eyes she would take in the whites of the room: The clean bedding, the ivory-colored carpet spread from wall to wall, the French Provincial bureau with gold filigree, the diaphanous curtains, and the satiny white wallpaper sprayed with pale pink flowers, as delicate as the apple blossoms on the tree in her father's garden. On Saturday mornings she would awake in pleasure to this room, to her whole house, but especially to this room. In the winter she would snuggle like a girl under warm blankets, revelling safe and sheltered from the blowing snow. No icy wind passed through the storm windows, no soldiers or peasants with daggered hands and murderous eyes through the double locked door. And in the summer, on mornings like this one, the sweet breeze and the song of birds that wafted

through the open window from the garden obliterated time altogether, until she was a girl in Stryzov when her mother and father were still alive. Only the pictures were missing to make the room complete. They had been destroyed along with everything else. On the bureau where her parents should have been enshrined to sacred rememberance were framed her husband and two daughters when they were still small. She made do.

Faegie came slowly out of sleep to the luxury of this room, so fine, so fragile, in an otherwise practical life, and to the long ache of her bones. The house was empty. There was no one to disturb her. 'Sheya had left before six as usual. He took his departure like a stopped figure in a recurrent dream. She saw him through closed eyes, bend over his shoes, and then disappear. She hardly heard him, and hardly cared anymore, though when she was younger and not yet resigned she used to long for his presence with all the poignancy of an adolescent for her first love. The children too were out of the house. Malka, the little one, was in Montreal, Canada, learning French and having a good time. Adele was spending the night in Manhattan, at a girl friends after a party, so she said. She could stay in bed. There was no one she had to get up for.

The clock on the bedtable told passed eight. 'Sheya would say she was lazy, lying so long between the sheets. "Are you sick?" he'd ask her. "American women sleep late," she'd want to say, but wouldn't say anything. What was the use of fighting. Maybe it was just as well he wasn't home.

Faegie pulled herself to a reclining position and reached into the nighttable for the newspaper clippings that she had found in Adele's desk drawer the night before. That there should be no misunderstanding, she hadn't been rummaging on purpose—she knew what her daughter would accuse her of—only looking for a pen to write out the checks with for the business; and then she was straightening out the mess that the girl always left her things in when the Apartment for Rent Ads offered themselves to her more attentive eye. Ads were circled and marked with checks and x's, addresses squeezed into the margins. Exactly what each marking meant she couldn't tell, but their meaning was clear: Adele intended to move out and leave her, again. It wasn't enough that she was out of the house at college for four years, all expenses paid by her parents, who killed themselves in a sweatshop for their children. No, that wasn't enough leaving then, when she could have studied at any of the city universities without paying tuition and lived at home. But now, after her daughter had come back to them for a summer, when Faegie almost didn't believe anymore that she would, and held out to them the illusory hope of a return to the nest, she was again preparing for flight. A few weeks before she had announced, with much too much satisfaction it now showed in retrospect, the receipt of a fellowship for graduate study, and it was obvious to Faegie that instead of putting the money to good use in a saving's account for the future, her daughter was planning to pour it all out on rent and extraneous living expenses.

No one had to tell her this in so many words. The ads were evidence of the offense and, oh, she knew her daughter well enough. She wasn't an educated woman. The War broke out before she finished grade school, and even before that she was never one to sit with her nose in a book. She was just a simple woman, a poor girl from a small village. But she had common sense. She wasn't stupid, as those daughters of hers with their colleges and upturned faces took her to be.

She had a nose for these things. Adele wanted to go off on her own and be independent. She said so often enough. "I want to be independent. I can't stay attached to you like a ten year old," she would declare, forgetting that she still had living parents in this world. As though children would be anyplace if it weren't for their parents. You bring them up, you diaper them, you wash them, you feed them, and little by little they leave you. Their whole growing is a leaving. You bring them up, and you want them to grow big and strong so that they can go into the world and face life, whatever it brings, and you work for them and give them everything you have, and you want them to be happy, and all the time like a fool you're preparing for their desertion. Little *cockers* they come into the world, no more than that, and then they grow up, they'd still be nothing if they didn't have parents who gave them and loved them; And speak of independence. Independence they want. It wasn't like that when she was young. Who thought about independence then? Who even knew the word? Until they weren't there anymore, she knew she had parents and she had to listen to them. That's what she knew. Not independence. That's an American invention, where people don't know they have families, where everybody goes to his tomb alone.

Looking back on it all, she could trace what happened, though only an historian could have predicted it. When they arrived in the United States, Adele was practically still in arms. 'Sheya was disappointed when she was born, he wanted a boy,like all men; but she herself was secretly glad the first was a girl. She would have a companion. Mother and daughter. That's how it would be. She would have a companion for her loneliness.Of course she learned soon enough that American families were different. They broke apart. Children left. Even daughters. They left to summer camps, colleges out of town, trips across the ocean to Europe. Yet when she saw her neighbors' daughters pack their bags and kiss their parents good-bye, and their parents smile like they didn't care, happy even, she looked at the lot of them as strange mutations of the human race. Nothing so unnatural would happen in her house.

Adele was such a good girl too. She was a big, healthy child who ate with the appetite of someone who had long been starved and slept through the night like a dog. She quickly got ahead of the other children in height and weight and before she reached adolescence already looked like a little woman. The two of them would walk sometimes, mother and

Toby Mostysser lives in Tel Aviv where she works as a wordmonger. Her most satisfying creation in recent years has been her daughter who in the course of events, will also leave one day.

daughter, hand in hand, a young mother, as she was, and a big girl, so that they could almost pass for sisters. "Is that your sister?" people who didn't know them would ask, and she felt so proud. Really, Adele was more like a sister than a daughter in some ways, almost like a mother even, who you could confide in and tell your heart to. How many times when 'Sheya got mad and slammed the door behind him would the two of them talk. She could talk to her like a grown-up person, and tell her what her bitter life was after Hitler tore it apart and being married to a man who was so hard and angry all the time and didn't know how to say affectionate words to a woman. Adele would listen so quietly, barely a word she let out, and you could see on her face how feeling and sensitive she was. She understood like a grown up, and you could share your pain with her.

Then it began to change, almost all at once, and she couldn't hold the reins back. Adele turned ten. Breasts and pimples sprouted, both together, like boils and tumors on a sick body. She got her period. Her waistline hadn't slimmed in yet. And sometimes she could swear that her daughter looked like a cannon ball. She didn't know what to do with her. She herself developed so slowly. When she was fourteen and the Germans came, she was under ninety pounds and practically flatchested. They took her mother away and forced her to be a woman all on her own, but physically she was still a girl. And here her daughter was blossoming out of a B cup. It was indecent.

Just when she reached the age when she could expect that everything that was good before would get better, everything turned around. Adele became withdrawn and sullen, like her father. She grew clumsy and sloppy, not like a woman at all. Before, she used to sew for her and dress her up neat and pretty like a doll. But now nothing she put on her fit. Her blouses pulled at the buttons and came out of the waists of her skirts, and her skirts, always too big or too small, bunched and twisted this way and that. She cut her braids, which had kept her hair tight and trim and out of her face, and now her hair stood on her head like a lion's mane. With the way she looked, you could hardly blame her for sometimes being ashamed to be seen with her in front of people.

She tried her best. Nobody could blame her for neglecting a mother's responsibilities. She took her to skin doctors and diet doctors, and didn't stint on the money, and made her promise to watch herself. But she had no sense in those years. She stuffed herself with chocolates and cakes and nuts and all the things girls her age were supposed to run away from like the plague, and when she hid them she would scavenge through the house like there was no tomorrow to find out all the hidden sweets and delicacies that they kept for company.

It's no wonder they fought. She didn't know what to do with her. She hadn't been like that. The girl who had been so good and so quiet would suddenly open a mouth. "Leave me alone," she would shout. "Look what you look like," she'd answer. "It's my body.""You're my daughter." So it would go back and forth until Adele would raise her shoulders and lift her chin into the air and say in full defiance of her mother. "It's my life. You had your youth. Let me live mine." And she would answer. "Youth? What youth? I had a youth? I had a Hitler." And Adele would storm out of the room like she didn't care any more.

That was the worst of the whole change, first the stubbornness about her appearance, her refusal to do anything to improve herself, and then this cutting herself off. The more she tried to reach her, the more she would withdraw. She looked at American mothers and their daughters and she saw that they were friends, they confided in each other. The girls would talk to their mothers. They would tell them about the things they did and the boys they liked. But her daughter, who was once her confidant, now told her nothing. "Who was at the party," she would ask her by way of an opener. "No one in particular." "What did you do?""Talked.""Who with?""No one special.""Did you dance?""Some." "What kept you so late?""Nothing." And she would work her way out of the room with heavy, graceless motions that tore at a mother's heart and find some book to bury herself in. She couldn't make it out. Her daughter talked to friends on the telephone for hours on end. Late at night, after she and 'Sheya went to bed, she would get on the telephone and talk and talk. Where did she find so much to say all of a sudden? For her mother she had only zippered lips.

She didn't like to complain to other people. Troubles shouldn't be told outside the family. But sometimes she couldn't help herself any more, and when 'Sheya wouldn't listen, she would open herself to a friend. Not in exact words, of course; to other people she always bragged about her daughters. But she would say in general things about today's generation, how they don't care about their parents the way her generation did. Her friends would answer just to answer. "It's only a phase. It'll pass." But what sort of phase was this that she had never gone through herself? It wasn't normal. She loved her mother when she departed.

And her friends were wrong in the end. In her last year of high school, Adele came home one day and announced that she wanted to go out of town to college. It was like a bolt of lightening out of the blue, that she never expected, and not so different maybe from the shock that overtook them when the Germans marched into Stryzov and evacuated it. With all of the fighting, the action could have been predicted, but until it happened, until it became a fact, it was unthinkable. They had talked about going to Russia, since the border wasn't far, but her father said that the cellar was full of potatoes and there was no point in going out and starving on the roads when the Russians were arresting the escapees and shipping them off to Siberia, so the news came back. And here, there were plenty of good colleges in New York, free too. So what sense does it make to pay hard earned security for something you can get just as good free of charge?

She told her daughter as much, but the girl never had to work for anything in her life and always had everything she wanted, so no wonder it was she didn't know the meaning of money and said, "But you have enough," as if there was no more to it. Anyway, what kind of person is it that gets up and leaves a good, comfortable home just like that? "Your father and me worked all our lives so you would have a home like this to come to. Don't you appreciate it?" But Adele didn't know the value of what she was walking out on. "If I can't leave a place, it's a prison," she spouted forth. "What kind of prison? It's your home. You don't know what a prison is. I know what a prison is. Your father knows what a prison is. You don't know.""A place I can't leave is a prison."

The little philosopher stuck to her position with more passion than Faegie expected to find in that phlegmatic and graceless body. She brought to her aid and defense one of the American teachers, who told them that Adele was a talented girl who should have the best possible education. "So what's wrong with the best possible education in New York? There's Barnard College for girls and the City College, where the most famous judges went.""Nothing's wrong with them," the teacher answered. "They're excellent schools. Only it's important for a young person to strike out on his own. Let them try their

ADELE WAS MORE LIKE A SISTER THAN A DAUGHTER...ALMOST LIKE A MOTHER EVEN,WHO YOU COULD CONFIDE IN AND TELL YOUR HEART TO.

wings, we say, learn about the world, experience life. In America everybody does it. And if their parents can afford it, there's nothing better for this than a good college education in a new environment." The teacher intimidated them with her "in America". She was so smooth and sure of herself and made it seem that the way things were done in America was the way God sent down from Mt. Sinai. And who were they, poor refugees taken in by this great country, to question its ordinances? So with time and battery, and after Adele brought friends and friends' parents home with their arguments, their resolve was broken down. Their daughter had her way, the unthinkable became fact. After Adele left, Malka followed in turn, as could only be expected once the doors were opened.

For the second time in her lifetime, Faegie's family was torn apart. A woman doesn't readily reconcile herself to such a tearing twice. Maybe if the first hadn't happened, the second leaving wouldn't have cut into her heart so deeply. Who knows? The first time she was young, and even when they made her father dig his own grave and they put her mother and sister on the line to the gas chamber, she still looked forward to the future. Maybe it was because she was too young to understand what was happening to her when she ran from her mother's side to the other line and then when she ran away from the labor camp with 'Sheya and her brother. But even at the worst moments then she wanted to live, and she looked forward to having a life when this *gehenom* would play itself out. But now that her daughter up and left the house, she looked back at the life she had led and wasn't at all sure that the *gehenom* had indeed ended. Was this living? Wearing herself into exhaustion in a sweatshop day after day, to make one more coat, one more dollar, for a husband who didn't know what a woman needed, and for children who began to leave you with their first step? Whatever the teacher said about how things were done in America, Faegie knew in her heart of hearts that Adele wanted nothing more than to run away from home, from her parents. It was clear enough once she let herself look at the truth. Her daughter always refused to share her life with her. All those years when she could, if she had only wanted to, have returned to her mother something of the years Hitler took away, she said no. She made herself ugly, forgive a mother for saying this of her daughter, and silent, and distant.

By the time Faegie poured her second cup of bitter coffee, she had turned the grief of a lifetime into justified anger, which would power her for the next step. She acknowledged her first mistake: letting Adele walk out four years ago. Now she was too much her own person; she thought that life means doing what you want to do, without consideration for other people. And, who knows, if she had stayed at home like a girl should, and not gone running off like someone with no background, she might have met a nice man and be married today, with a house and a husband, and grandchildren for her parents, to fill the empty space. That would have been the right and natural way of going, not just running off into a wilderness and coming back with empty hands, but bringing something, children, and happiness and fullness.

But that mistake was made already, like many others. This desertion would have to be prevented. She would have to take matters into her own hands this time and not let herself be persuaded. Well, she wouldn't let herself be frightened again. When she put her mind to it, she knew how to handle things. That much was fortunate. If you asked Adele, she would tell you that her mother was a hysterical woman. "Everytime something happens, you act like the world's going to end," she would tell her. "A cup breaks, a worker doesn't show up one day, a check bounces, and you go off like a firecracker on doomsday.""I'm a nervous woman," she had to confess. "Who wouldn't be after what I went through?" And Adele was silenced. But when a real catastrophe was upon her, then she knew how to take hold of herself and the situation.

Faegie sat herself straight up in her chair, took a fortifying breath, and experienced the full capacity of her shoulders and her hands. Those shoulders of hers had bent over great troughs of dough in the *lager* and those hands shaped loaves for over forty men. In those shoulders and those hands she placed her confidence, not in the unreliable world, which had done nothing to merit her faith. It was their young strength that had saved her, and it was in their power to shape reality that she believed. They at least had proved themselves. Not only in the *lager*, but all those years in America, when she brought up the children with one hand and ran the shop with the other. 'Sheya was a good workman, she had to respect him for that, but without her he couldn't have managed the business. He wasn't the type. She was more than an equal partner. And while she envied all those women who could just sit home all day and look out the window, and didn't have to rush and carry and pull and keep the workers contented in a sweatshop, you couldn't deny that she felt satisfaction in her accomplishment. So she made herself ready. If the years hadn't brought her pleasure, they had taught her to face challenges and overcome obstacles. In her mind she gathered her forces. Now it remained to

MY FATHER'S DEATH

Avrom Abba ben Sholom David, of blessed memory

1. After the Shiva* *at the Metropolitan Museum*

Sitting across from Degas'
"Woman with Chrysanthemums,"
spillage of bloom in the center,
on the right, her blase eye
overscanning the wooden horizon:
Is there a garden there, someone

waiting? In the next room
people coming, leaving (excess
of inscrutable motion, excess
of distraction) pass between
you and the image, where you
thought you would at last find space.

When the crowd thins, wending
toward other attractions,
when it's summer or winter
or a workday or any day,
when you've stopped counting days,
you will try again.

2. Six months later

The world is having a delayed reaction
to my father's death.
Today came a letter of regrets
for not having been there to bury or praise.
As if our actions were a saving grace.

My father floats in a sky of forgetfulness.
Once he asked me to forgive,
now he is easy with himself.
When his hard and heavy breathing
stopped that morning in October,
he had no more expectations.

Let him go, and go on without him.
He is dead and it is late.
Our sins number and multiply
unconsciously, but my father
has no need, forgives all.

—Marcia Falk

*In Jewish tradition, the seven-day period of mourning during which the bereaved receive visitors in their home.

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set a plan in action.

But it was early yet, and the day of freedom she looked forward to every week stretched in front of her like an empty tunnel. She sighed and cleaned up the breakfast dishes and sought for a more concrete occupation to fill the idle time until Adele came home. She looked around. There was nothing much for her to do. The house was as spic and span as on any TV commercial. The carpet was vacuumed, the dust frighted away, you could eat off the kitchen floor. The refrigerator was filled to brimming, prepared for half a week of normal duty or for any emergency, such as unexpected company or a war. The livingroom windows and bathroom tiles shined. Really, it was a wonder she did all this. Other women stayed home and didn't have to work, and didn't accomplish half as much. But she knew how to put her time to use. No one could accuse her of lazying away an evening.

Now Saturday remained to be filled. If Adele were home, she could talk to her, and the time would pass away of itself. She didn't know when Adele would be back, though. "I don't even know when I'll get up in the morning, how should I know when I'll get back?" was her daughter's answer when she asked. The girl had no consideration for a mother's feelings and was even more secretive and evasive now than she was as a teenager. She had taken to spending nights in the city, at friend's apartments, that's what she said, so she wouldn't have to ride back late on the subway. Yet Faegie wondered. Why wouldn't she want to write down a phone number? She would explain every time that you could never tell, there might be an emergency, she might need her for something, it's always good to give a number. But yesterday she had to remind her daughter three times, and if she hadn't caught her just at the door, Adele would have walked out without letting anyone know where she could be reached. She forgot, she said. Go and believe her. They say professors are absent-minded. Still, who could know what a girl that age might be doing; and, unfortunately, Faegie could imagine only too vividly, though it was her daughter, and she always brought her up to go on the right path.

The kitchen clocked showed passed nine. Adele should be up by now. The telephone hanging on the wall next to the table gleamed and beckoned, promised to fill up the empty spaces and gratify a mother's desire. Faegie hesitated. Adele might be angry, she got annoyed so easily. But, after all, she is her mother, and a mother has a right to know. She would just ask he what time she was planning to come home. That was a legal enough question.

Faegie's fingers followed the motions of her heart. At the other end, the phone

rang and rang. There was no answer, which threw Faegie into a momentary confusion, until she could reset the gears of her mind to tackle a new problem. There were so many possibilities. Hopefully, Adele was on her way home already. But then why didn't her friend answer? Anyway, after a night of partying, would she be getting out of bed at this hour? No, the signs pointed in less favorable directions. Maybe her daughter was out looking for an apartment. Or maybe she spent the night somewhere else, someplace she wouldn't want her mother to know. Faegie could barely decide which eventually was worse, both struck her as dismal. With all that she did, her daughter would elude her. So be it then. Faegie had known enough defeats in her life not to let this one rout her. She would muster her new rancor for the more important battle that was soon to follow. That would be the important struggle, maybe the last opportunity life would offer her.

Waiting for her daughter's return, Faegie went through the rituals of Saturday. She phoned Adele, not her daughter, the other one. She was always sorry after she spoke with her—the woman had grown such a cow in her old age. Maybe she always was 'Sheya and Adele both said so, but then she had formed the attachment so long ago, right after the liberation, in the DP camp, and habits are hard to break.

"Hello."

"Hello."

"How are you?"

"Fine. Fine. How are you?"

"Alright. I'm just sitting here drinking coffee."

"You shouldn't drink so much coffee. It's bad for your nerves."

"I know. But what can I do? I'm like a drug addict. I can't wake up without coffee. And we're all so nervous anyway, a little more, a little less, what's the difference?"

"It's only a bad habit."

"Maybe. But what pleasures do I have in my life that I should deny myself coffee too?"

"Is 'Sheya home?"

"No. He had to go in today." Faegie resisted telling her not to ask what she already knew.

"He works too hard. You should tell him to take it easy a little. He deserves to take it easy once in a while. We all do. Tell me, what does he do there all the time?"

"It's the season. It's busy. You know how it is. We work when we can, not when we want to. That's the kind of busines it is. We're sewing for winter now."

"My Ben'che is here with me, sitting right next to me—he says hello, you should come over later. How's Adele?"

"Alright."

"David just finished breakfast and is studying in his room for the test for the Master's degree. It's an important test. He has a big date with his fiancé tonight, so he has to study now in the morning. Is Adele there?"

"No, she's still sleeping. She came home late last night, from a party in New York, and she's tired."

"She went to a party?"

"Yes."

"With someone special?"

"No. I don't think so. She has a lot of friends. They always invite her...Adele, I hear the postman. I'm waiting for a letter from the little one. I'll come over later."

The mail wasn't due for an hour yet. Why do I always let her make me feel small? Faegie wondered. 'Sheya says she's nothing but a foolish old woman. "What do you need her for? She's twenty years older than you. What do you have in common with her, a woman enough to be your mother?"

She knew. Still, the ties were strong. People don't make friendships like that anymore. They became friends when

neither of them had anything or anybody—in the long days at the DP camp, when the men left early in the mornings to sell watches and stockings and other whatnots to the Germans, and the women waited, those that were lucky waited, for their husbands to return, their business done, late in the evenings. Faegie waited for 'Sheya. Adele waited for Ben'che. They waited with longing and with trepidation, in case there was some trick, in case there was some accident, and their husbands would disappear like the others had. They waited, and they talked. Faegie told Adele about her sainted mother and martyred sister. Adele told of the blessed baby daughter the Germans took away and she never saw again. They waited and they talked, shared their desire and their fear, and the bonds that bind one heart to another bound themselves.

Faegie looked up to Adele in those days. Even in the rags they all wore, Adele looked like a lady. She knew how to carry herself and how to hold her head. Faegie would watch her walk and sit and stand and would learn from her the art of what it was to be a woman. When she became pregnant it was to Adele that Faegie naturally turned to teach her the things that a mother teaches a daughter. Adele was knowledge. Adele was grace. Adele was comfort and consolation. It was a good thing for Faegie that by the time Adele and Ben'che got their permits and left to America that her own little Adele was born, and she had somebody to care for and busy away the time, because in the long hours when 'Sheya was gone and her precious infant asleep and she waited alone and there was no work to occupy her, she would feel lost, like a homeless spirit adrift in empty blue space. Those moments, thank God, didn't come often, she knew how to push them away.

The first years in America were good too. The friends lived in nearby Brooklyn neighborhoods, only a short bus ride away, and in nice weather they walked to visit. The children played together. Adele and Faegie continued to confide in each other, though each was already busy with her own troubles. A few years later Adele and Ben'chie bough an expensive house in Queens. Faegie and 'Sheya scraped together every cent they had and followed after, a move they never regretted. Faegie in particular loved the solid brick and stone of the house and the sturdy, deep-rooted trees outside. The real estate value went steadily up and long ago returned the investment.

So when did it all change? When did the friendship begin to taste bitter in the mouth? Maybe when we bought the house, Faegie thought, when I began to come into my own. Ben'che helped us find it, and Adele said how happy she was we'd be neighbors and have each other to talk to. But one night before we signed the contract, she said, "Oh, Faegie, how will you and 'Sheya be able to pay the mortgage? You have to work so hard. It would be so much better to keep the downpayment in the bank and you can have the interest to live from "—like she didn't want us to buy it and have something of our own, and her meaning had to be hidden in words that sounded like she wanted the best for me. But if we'd listened to her then we'd have nothing today, and the principal in the bank wouldn't have twenty percent of its original value.

I began to dress then too. Not in hundred dollar suits, like she did, it was a lot of money for us. But now I knew how to hold myself, like she taught me and I put on a simple dress or a nice skirt and blouse and combed my hair and put on a little lipstick, and I was a goodlooking woman. Even after two children, my skin stayed smooth and I kept my figure—while her backside was already flowing out of her girdle and her face, when she didn't smear creams on it and cover it with powder, looked like a potato that lay in the cellar all winter. It was then, maybe when I began to grow into a full woman, ripe like, and didn't have to listen to her anymore, that the spite in her came up and the envy. But I didn't pay attention then, I didn't see it all at once. A person doesn't see so quckly what they don't want to.

Faegie's daughter came in quietly, like she didn't want to be heard. "Where were you?" Faegie asked before she could get to her room.

"When?"

"This morning."

"I told you, at Sherry's."

"I telephoned before nine. Nobody answered."

"We went to the park."

"To the park? What for?"

"To take a walk. To see some trees, grass."

"So early? Who goes to the park so early?"

"It's nice before all the people come."

"Don't you think it's dangerous to go walking in the park?"

"Well, there were two of us. And nobody's going to attack us on a Saturday morning."

"You never know."

"You never know anything in this life, and I can't go around being afraid all the time."

"What time did the party finish?'

"Around midnight."

"How was it?"

"Alright."

"Did you meet anyone?"

"No one in particular."

"I talked to Adele. She asked about you, whether you were home."

"The busybody puts her nose into everything."

"I told her you were sleeping."

"Why?"

There was anger in her daughter's voice, and here a mother was just trying to make conversation. You can't say anything to her these days. Still, Faegie was not going to be deterred. "Come into the living room. I want to talk to you."

The two women sat down at opposite ends of the couch. Adele looked at her mother with suspicion. Despite her

preparation, Faegie didn't feel ready. She felt like she was facing an adversary in a courtroom, not a daughter. She looked down at the carpet, bright green at their feet, like the eternal grass. It was Adele who persuaded her to buy green. When they moved into the house, she had her heart set on beige or pale gold, the fashion then, and it seemed to her the height of elegance. But Adele said, "Green is more practical. I'm not going to take my shoes off every time I walk into the house. A house is to live in, not to look at." So Faegie bowed to her daughter's judgement: green for the rooms that the family used, the pure beauty of white for the master bedroom.

Adele waited. Faegie drew the Apartment for Rent ads out of her pocket and placed them on the black marble table with the goldleaf painted wooden base that separated the two women. Adele glanced down, then averted her eyes. Her daughter objected to that table too, Faegie recalled. "This is showy and fake," she pronounced. "Why don't you get something simple like Colonial or Danish?" But here Faegie stuck her ground, because her daughter was in the wrong. After she worked so hard to have her own house and to root herself, Faegie would have only the finest and the best in her home. This table caught her imagination. She saw in the opulent grain of the marble and dull gleam of the gold paint a long tradition of unknown aristocracies going back far in history to the present day, and she grasped at it. Her daughter's taste reminded her of the rustic furniture that the peasants in the village had.

"Well?" Adele cut into her mother's musings.

Faegie felt caught in a desperate confusion. This wasn't like her, thinking about furniture when she had a vital matter to deal with. "Do you remember how we decorated the house?" she blurted out, trying to cover her distraction.

"Yes. I remember how you decorated the house. Is that what you want to talk to me about?"

Faegie pointed to the newspaper clippings. "Are you looking for an apartment?" she said more than asked, biding her time, not fully knowing what was going to come next.

Adele nodded.

Faegie took a deep breath and thrust her chin out. Then the words came, unplanned words, words that she hadn't thought through that morning while she waited. "I don't want you to leave," she said into her daughter's defiant eyes. "I don't want you to leave. Don't say anything. I know what you're going to say. Everybody moves out. You want to be independent. The travelling to and from the city is hard. You want your privacy. You've said all that before. And I listened. Now you listen to me.

"You don't know what it is to leave. You sit here in the warmth and comfort of our home, and you take it all for granted. You don't know what a home means. You don't know how to value a home. You've always had one. We worked hard, your father and me, for you to have a home to come to and to bring people to and to be proud of. I know you think your parents are old fashioned and don't know anything. But we did things that people with more education and advantages couldn't always do. After the War, we had nothing, and we built a home for you out of nothing.

WE REFUGEES, WE'RE NOT LIKE AMERICAN PARENTS WHO THINK ONLY FOR THEMSELVES AND GO OUT AND HAVE A GOOD TIME AND LEAVE THEIR CHILDREN WITH BABYSITTERS. I STAYED WITH YOU WHENEVER I COULD. I WAS ALWAYS AFRAID WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.

"When I was a girl, I never had what you have. We lived six of us in two rooms, that's all, and I was lucky when I could sleep in the kitchen that was still warm from the oven. Your uncles and me used to fight over the beds and who would get the warmer blanket. Your uncle Saul always got it because he was older, and everything went to the oldest.

"Then the Germans came and took even that. They drove us out of our house, and after the war when I went back with your father, I saw Poles living in it. 'Are you Jews still alive?' they asked us, So we had to leave. They were killing the Jews who came back."

"You told me all this, many times."

"No. I never told you, never really, not everything. I told you about my father, how they made him dig his own grave. I was alone in the house with your father—he was just out of the hospital, and it was before things really started, and we weren't married yet. My mother left the house early in the morning. I don't remember why. Maybe to sell something or to buy something. I don't know. There was a noise and my father went outside. The Germans were rounding up Communists. They saw him, an old Jew with a hat on his head and a beard, and they picked him up too. I saw. We stood at the window, your father and me. I wanted to run out to him, but your father held me back. He said they'd kill us. I watched. There was a field. The Germans made them pick up shovels and dig a big pit. Then they shot. I screamed "Daddy!" and held onto your father. He pulled away.

"My mother came back later that day. When she heard, she turned her eyes up and an expression like an angel's came into her face, and she said, 'Don't worry, don't worry, Faegie, we'll be together one day.' I thought she was crazy. 'Don't you understand?' I cried. 'Yes, yes, I understand.' That's all she said."

"You told me all this already."

"No. Not all of it. This is only the beginning. I never told you the rest. I couldn't. I wanted. I wanted so much, but I couldn't bring myself to. Now it's important. I have to tell you."

"Mother, what's the use?"

"The Germans went, and we hoped that would be the end of them. I think we knew it wouldn't but we hoped; and there was no place to run by then. Then they came back. It was maybe after a few days, a week, or a month. I can't tell you. Time had no meaning then. They came back and they took us all.

"I won't tell you everything. There's too much to tell, and I don't know how. Only this. This you have to know. They separated us into lines. Your father and your uncles to the right; to the left the women with small children, and the old, and the young. I stood with my sister and mother. We didn't know what right and left meant then. Now everybody knows. But then you couldn't imagine those things, we didn't want to. I was skinny and I had no breasts yet and looked younger than my age. My sister was the big and healthy one, but you could see that she was still a child, not even ten yet. She was like you, full, and she liked to eat. She would have wanted to live too. My mother looked at the men on the line across from us, and she said to me, 'Faegie, go to Saul, run; you'll cook for him, he'll need you.' Saul was always spoiled in the house. He was the oldest, but my mother treated him like a baby.

"I ran. There was a guard who pretended not to see. I ran. I left my mother and my sister there. Do you understand? I left them there. To die. To be gassed to death. A voice called after me. 'Faegie, don't leave me! Faegie, don't leave me!' I don't know whose voice it was. It could've been my sister's voice;

but maybe my mother changed her mind and it was her voice. I don't know. I was running too fast. I didn't listen to the voice. You see, I didn't listen then. Now I hear the voice all the time in my mind.

"From the other side, we saw the people being marched away. My mother and sister held onto each other. They left together. The guards were pushing us in the other direction so that we wouldn't look. They said they were going to a rest camp and that soon we'd meet again in the family camp. I wanted to believe them. Saul said I was an idiot, didn't I understand yet who the Germans were? It would've been better if I'd stayed where they put me and gone with the others, he said. Your father told him to keep his mouth shut, we'd manage somehow. I suppose he meant well, yes he did; but he spoke so harsh, even to me. And I felt so alone. I wanted my mother. But she left already, with my sister. And once we got to the *lager*, I didn't believe anymore what the Germans promised, that we'd all meet. I wanted my mother."

Faegie paused, waiting, she wasn't sure for what, for some response. Adele remained silent, her face a blank, not a promise, not a sign. Faegie continued. "You see, this is what you don't know. How my mother and sister walked away, arm in arm, and how I never saw them again. I wanted my mother so much. You don't know this. What it is to part with a mother and to need a mother and not to have one.

"When you were little, we never left you to go out and enjoy ourselves at night. Your father and me didn't leave you with babysitters. We refugees, we're not like American parents who think only for themselves and go out and have a good time and leave their children with babysitters. I stayed with you whenever I could. I was always afraid what would happen. If sometimes I had to go out, I saw pictures in my mind. You fell, you got sick, somebody kidnapped you. I heard your voice crying. I ran back as fast as I could. Later I had to go to work with your father, but what did I think about all day? You and Malka. You and your sister. That's what kept me going all these years, that I could see you in my mind and talk to you, and that I came home and you were safe.

"Your father wanted a boy, especially the first. You know how European men are. When you were born, I was afraid of what he'd say to me, but secretly I was happy. It was a miracle to me to have a child after everything that happened. It was like the world was opening up before me and I'd have a new life. And that you were a girl I was double happy. I'd have a companion, somebody to talk to. I wanted to name you Nehema, after my mother, but your father wouldn't let me. He said that if he didn't have a boy, he at least wanted to name you after his mother. I gave in. I had no choice. Anyway, I liked the name Adele. Do you know what it means? *Aedel:* loyal, close to home. I said to myself I'll have an *aedel* child, and even if I can't name her after my mother, she'll be a comfort to me. My mother's name, *Nehama,* means comfort. I was happy.

"And now you want to leave. Out of the blue, when you don't even know what it means to leave. How many nights when you're alone and you're feeling sad you'll wish, 'If only I had my mother, I'd have someone to talk to. I'd have someone to care for me.' Even with a husband, it's not the same. There's nothing like a mother's love. A husband won't give you a mother's love.

"So you see. I can't have you leave. I forbid you to leave."

Faegie looked at her daughter. The girl sat there, expressionless, frozen as the marble on a tomb. What was the matter with her? Faegie too remained motionless and, now that she'd finished, as weary and patient as the eternal grass. She looked at her daughter over the distance of the black marble table with the painted gold leaf base. The table seemed to rise out of the carpet like a monument. How huge the space between them suddenly seemed. Everything was dead still. Not even the air moved. The newspaper ads lay on the tabletop like dead soldiers. Finally Adele nodded, but with such a subtle and indistinct motion that Faegie couldn't tell whether she turned her head up and down or left and right. She thought what she wanted to.

For several weeks, or maybe it was only days, the time stretched so, no one broached the subject. Adele came and went, sometimes informing her mother that she was spending the night at a friend's. Faegie tried not to ask too many questions, though old habits are hard to break, and she carried the forced constraint in the pucker of her lips.

Then one day they came home from work to find a note on the kitchen table, held in place by a coffee cup. "I found an apartment and have moved my things over. I'm sorry I had to leave this way, but you gave me no choice. If you want to reach me...."

Faegie let out a loud wail. The end had come. Then she sat down and put her head on the table and cried, and cried, and cried, the bitter tears of a girl for her first love. ■

"The authors write with feeling and understanding about the experience of rape from the victim's point of view. Bart and O'Brien exhaustively document the diversity of active strategies women can and do use to resist rape. This is the kind of book that mothers (and fathers) should give their daughters."
—Joseph H. Pleck and Elizabeth H. Pleck
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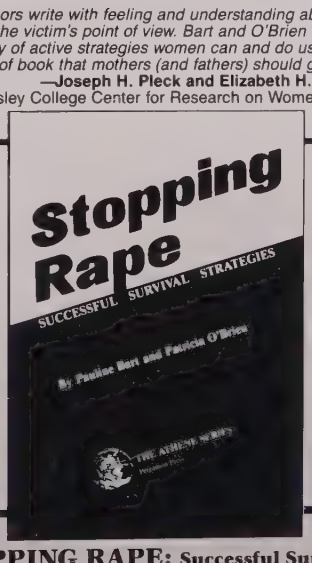

See the interview with Pauline Bart in this issue

STOPPING RAPE: Successful Survival Strategies
by Pauline B. Bart and Patricia H. O'Brien

This straightforward book is a response to the many questions asked of the authors about what to do when faced with sexual assault. The study focuses on the difference between women who were raped and women who avoided being raped, in an attempt to identify factors associated with the victim's avoidance. Based upon interviews with 94 assault victims, this study explodes the myths about rape which help to maintain the inequality between the sexes. The authors speak out for the development of a sense of self which reacts strongly and angrily to this crucial assault on bodily autonomy and gives women the strength to fight back.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America by Lenore J. Weitzman, 504 pp., New York, Free Press, 1985, $19.95

Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody by Phyllis Chesler, 651 pp., New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., $22.95

Reviewed by Rochelle G. Saidel

Lenore J. Weitzman's *The Divorce Revolution* and Phyllis Chesler's *Mothers on Trial*, two new books about new trends in legislation concerning divorce, child custody and support, present frightening pictures of new discrimination against women. While gender inequalities still abound, women have attained "equality" in matters of custody and support. More and more fathers are seeking custody, and both Weitzman and Chesler say fathers win the majority of contested cases. In many states, divorce, custody and support laws are now "gender neutral", a new inequity sometimes blamed on the demands of the feminist movement.

Within our patriarchal and capitalist socio-economic system, women seem to have won the equal right to become unequal. With this "right" came two growing threats: Loss of custody and, consequently, the legal obligation to pay child support to custodial fathers.

Rochelle G. Saidel, a doctoral student on political science at CUNY, is the author of *The Outreached Conscience: Seekers of Justice for Nazi War Criminals in America* (SUNY Press).

Weitzman's research began with the change to no-fault divorce law in 1970 in California, but her book has dire warnings for women in the 50 states. She says: "No-fault attempts to treat men and women equally—or as if they were equal—at the point of divorce. However, it ignores the structural inequality between men and women in the larger society." According to Weitzman, a sociologist, women and minor children in their households experience a 73 percent decline in standard of living in the first year after divorce. In contrast, men experience a 42 percent rise in their standard of living one year after divorce.

The explanation is simple. A person cannot suddenly become equal, after years of inequality in marriage. During those years the woman's career often stood still, while she enabled the man's to advance. Coming from this "traditional" marriage, she now is an "equal" person who faces loss of custody and payment of child support to her ex-husband. But during their marriage, their genders were neither "neutral" nor equal.

Weitzman says: "Gender-neutral rules—rules designed to treat men and women 'equally'—have in practice served to deprive divorced women (especially older homemakers and mothers of young children) of the legal and financial protections that the old law provided...When the legal system treats men and women 'equally' at divorce, it ignores the very real economic inequalities that marriage creates."

Women for whom the "rules changed in the middle of the game" are pointed out by her as especially in need of legal consideration. Weitzman calls for legislative protection for such women, proposing a "grandmother clause" so that older women who married and lived under traditional rules are entitled to maintain the same standard of living as their former husbands.

She devotes several chapters to marital property, stating that pensions, professional degrees, and other career assets should be recognized as marital property and fairly divided upon divorce. The New York State Court of Appeals ruled unanimously on December 26, 1985 that Loretta O'Brien, who helped pay for her former husband's medical education, was entitled to a share of the value of the license he subsequently received. (Unfortunately, there is no "grandmother clause".) Weitzman cites six other states—Colorado, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Washington and Wisconsin—as having case law precedents that recognize a property interest in professional degrees.

Chesler's book focuses on her interviews with sixty women who were challenged for custody between 1960 and 1981. The overwhelming majority lost custody and Chesler, a psychologist, places major blame on economic

considerations. Fathers have more money to pay attorneys to keep a legal battle going, and also have more material benefits to offer children. Although there had been "maternal preference" in custody for most of this century, by the 1970s there was a marked shift to gender-neutral language in custody law, Chesler says. "Best interest" of the child is usually the underlying principle now, but standards are in flux. The result has been a trend toward paternal preference over the past decade. (She does not provide a state-by-state breakdown.)

Both authors agree that with regard to custody, gender-neutral standards are not applied appropriately to whoever does the primary caretaking. Instead, standards ignore primary parenting and discriminate on the basis of gender. As a result, women unfairly lose custody, and children lose the nurturing of their primary caretaker.

A related trend is modification of custody decrees in favor of the parent who has remarried and can offer a child a "nuclear family"—usually the father. A stepmother's presence implies she is available and suitable as a caretaker; a stepfather's presence does not.

One reason for the trend to more custody by fathers is the emergence of father's rights groups, which have been lobbying for custody laws and divorce reforms that are "fair" to them. If a father wants the children (especially if he has a new wife), he seems to have an increasingly better chance of acquiring custody. If he does not want them—and most men still do not—he does not have to take them. More and more, it is becoming his choice. Even worse, there seems to be a trend toward giving women custody of young children. When they become less work and more enjoyable (and especially if the father has remarried), the mother's children are subsequently taken away from her.

The trend toward more father-custody (with concurrent possibility of child support from non-custodial mothers) has grave economic implications for women. This is especially so if a "best interest" argument is made on the grounds of which parent has greater economic resources and social status.

The women's movement is not yet sufficiently alarmed by these recent trends toward father-custody and mother-support to come forward and admit lack of foresight in calling for gender-neutral language in law, with resultant gender-neutral custody and enforcement of child support obligations. Unless this crucial issue is seriously addressed now, it will prove tragic for women in ever-increasing numbers.

The law and the courts need to recognize women's history of economic deprivation, and should use an "affirmative action" approach to compensate for "unneutral" gender inequalities. Without such a policy, on matters of custody and child support, there can be no real equality for women. The Weitzman and Chesler books are important, because they expose and detail the dangers some women are already facing today. Unless there is vigorous opposition from the women's movement, more and more women will become victims of this gender-neutral "equality". ■

JEWISH DIVORCE

There are only three things you need to know about a Jewish divorce.

One. This is the real divorce,
even if your husband doesn't believe it
and your friends never heard of it.

Two. This is the real divorce,
even if your mother made you do it.

Three. The civil divorce was irrelevant to God.

***

The rest you don't need to know, but only remember:

The main thing you'll remember is the thing about the names.

The rabbis will ask you over and over
to tell them your nickname
and what was your father's name?
And what is his nickname and what does he go by?
They'll ask over and over to get it right.
They'll call him long distance just to be sure.
He'll be startled and stutter,
I am Lazar, ben Avram.
Your husband will be furious, just like always.
You'll whisper he should tell them his father's on vacation.
It's OK to help him lie. You were his wife.
You'll always be partly a wife to him.
That's a pact more sacred even than this.

The room will smell like musty prayerbooks
with big Hebrew letters,
and fragile yellow tallises with ragged fringes.
You'll keep looking up, expecting your grandfather;
you'll look for your uncles, who always judge you.
You'll think your whole family is in the room.

The rabbis won't let you sit with your husband
once they start to write the document.
He'll look upset, like a little boy.
You'll watch each other across the room.
You'll wink at him like a wife would.

You're allowed to ask for a cookie,
even though you're female.
One rabbi will be writing with a quill and ink
while another one dictates.
You'll listen to the Hebrew for a long, long time,
while a third rabbi watches them,
smoking a cigarette,
like some kind of guard.
You'll take lots of notes.
When you get home, you'll promptly misplace them.

Somewhere across the country,
your father will be pacing the floor.
I am Lazar ben Avram.
He'll wonder if he got it right.
Meanwhile, you'll wonder if the divorce is invalid
because they didn't call your husband's father.
You'll remind yourself you didn't tell his nickname,
but you won't speak up.
Perhaps this means you'll still be married?

You can be certain that rams' horns will blow
and angels will thunder in the heavens.

You'll wonder what your name is.
Is it Barb or Barbara?
Is it Bat Yah like your Hebrew teacher said,
or is it Basha Ruchel?
That's the name your mother gave you
to honor her dead sister; this gives you the creeps.
Bat Yah means "Daughter of God."
For a while your name was the same as that man's,
the one who's staring at you across the room,
like a condemned prisoner.
Now you're back to the last name you had first.

Your father will talk about the phone call
for several days.
He'll wonder if he's Lou or Louie.
He'll wake up at night, saying,
"I am Lazar ben Avram."

His name is Daddy. And I am Basha Ruchel.

***

There's one part you won't remember.

After the writing there's some other ritual.
You turn around in circles
or maybe you leave the room.
You won't remember.
It's the part where your husband is allowing your freedom.
What are you anyway that you can be given away?
Why didn't the rabbis ask for your mother's name?
Silently you'll thank them for protecting the legitimacy
of the future children you don't plan to have.
Still, you'll know this one was the real divorce.
You'll look at your husband. He'll look ill.

At the end the rabbis will presume they did you a mitzvah.
"Better luck next time, Basha Ruchel."

—Barbara Bialick

Barbara Bialick is a poet, journalist, author of children's books, freelance and everything writer in the Boston area. A native of Detroit, she has also been published as a poet in *Jewish Currents*.

POETRY

DOMESTIC DINNER

1.
We cook for the party as the radio drones
Reports from Tyre and melancholy patriotic songs
"The sadder the music, the more dead" we know
From experience. Last year a building collapsed"
Before that was the war and unending lists of funerals

"I knew the truck was loaded with explosives
When it turned the corner.
We don't have chevrolets,
Don't enter the stockade
At that speed.
I fired. Hit
the driver. Kept
Firing, but the truck
Rolled down to the building
Then blew up."
The guard, staring off,
Lies in bed whispering to the microphone
How he ran out to help the medics
Round up escaping prisoners, warn the others,
Before the noise of the blast invaded him.

He hangs his head
For having failed
to stop the truck
to save sixty lives.

Exuberant:
The suicide driver
Once detained in the stockade
Where thirty one prisoners
Were blown up today.

The smell of onion soup and sound of nervous interviews
Pervade the house.
Before the guests arrive we watch the news
Angry, analytical, helpless—
Neither heroes nor madmen.

2.
"All the time: you think somehow the ones in charge know
What they're doing. Then this happens,
And it's clear they don't." Muma shakes her head
"That means any one of us could run this thing better
Then the generals and the senators."

she has been sketching the path she would have made
To ensure safe entrance into the compound.
She seems so logical, so wise
My grey-haired sister in law with shining eyes.

Why isn't she in charge?
Why aren't I?

—Karen Alkalay-Gut

Karen Alkalay-Gut has just published her third book of poetry entitled *Mechitza* (Cross-Cultural Communications). She lives in Israel and teaches American Literature at Tel Aviv University. She recently completed a biography of Adelaide Crapsey, an American poet who died in 1914. Alkalay-Gut's first two books of poetry are *Making Love Poems* (Now Publications, Israel) and *Butter Sculptures* (Kibbutz HaMeuchad).

THE HOLOCAUST REVISION - I

Here is the story of life without
interruption in which my
parents marry and have a
son, my older brother, and
my father's business thrives
and I am born into prosperity
and happiness and by the
age of three am enamored of
cafés and the talk of
relatives and have a
feeling for parks and town squares
and by five I am the family
historian collecting images
and when I finally begin to write
I am a fountain of words.

Katherine Janowitz has had her poems published in *Ms.*, *Jewish Currents* and *European Judasim*, and will be included in the anthology *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust* (Avon). Two more of her poems on the Holocaust are scheduled to appear in *Partisan Review*. She is a mother of two and lives in New York.

THE HOLOCAUST REVISION - II

I will bring my coffee, I will
bring my book and we will
talk at a small table in
our favorite restaurant in
this town where we live and
where our families lived and
we will be like the branches of
a great tree that has been
allowed to grow without
interruption and if you could
see inside us you would see
the rings of growth one inside
the other and you would see
how perfect we were able to become.

—K. Janowitz

A JEW WALKS

A Jew walks in New York
(God, I love this city!)
just like he owns the place.

After two thousand years of longing
We choose Babylon.

—Henny Wenkart

Children have been learning to read from Wenkart's books for 25 years, while she raised her family and earned her Ph.D. in Cambridge. Now back in New York, she is translating the memoirs of Pauline Wengeroff, writing a memoir and poetry of her own, and teaching writing and philosophy.

A RECONSTRUCTION

When I came back, one year later,
the furniture was gone. Every room
bare. Neighbors were no longer friends.
They could not ask me in to verify
the rumors: in the parlor of #47, in
#30's bedroom closet, on the second
shelf in #60 attic I would find

my mother's wedding dress,
combs, candlesticks, the silver brooch
she wore to synagogue, the towels
she embroidered for her trousseau;

our dark walnut dining set, the Sabbath
tablecloth that glowed a thousand washdays,
eight chairs worn in eight different
ways, down quilts as still as snow,

beds; sixteen pairs of shoes, two sets of
Passover dishes, two sets of everyday
dishes, my father's hat and footstool,
mother's rocker,

sister's school uniform, and the box
under each brother's bed: soccer ball,
skates made of wood, wheels,
accounting books, a Russian novel in
Hungarian (a hand-stitched bookmark half-way through), letters,

photographs—what would #20 want
with such old photographs—or the journal
I was keeping, to help me remember the
days at the end?

—Florence Weinberger

Florence Weinberger, who grew up in New York, has written poetry all her life. She is a graduate of Hunter College, and has been widely published in literary journals, including *Poetry LA* and a special issue of *Kalic* on women and aging. The former New Yorker now lives in California with her husband and two daughters.

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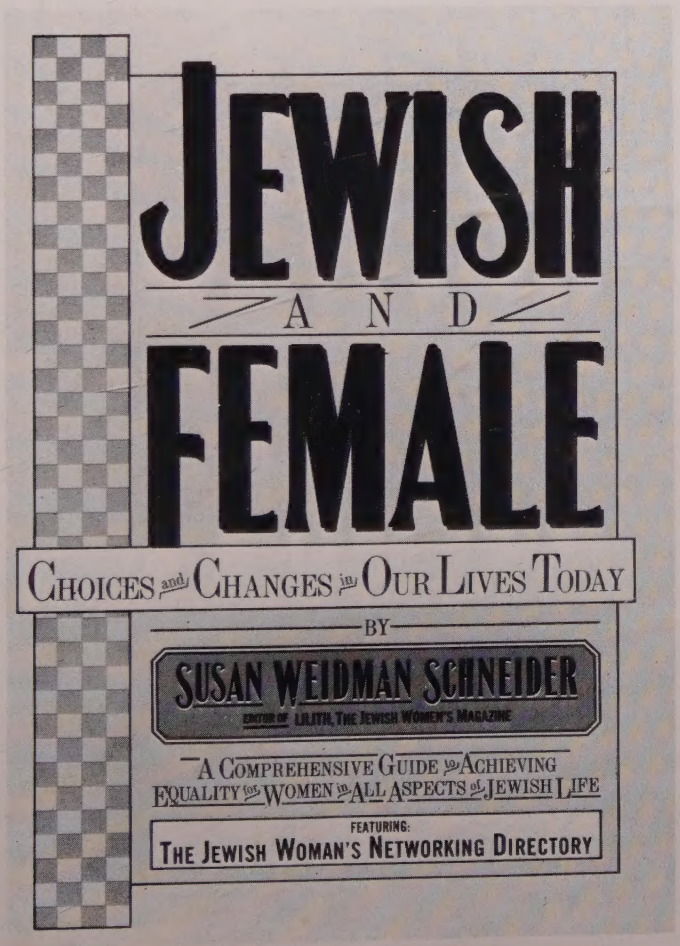
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AND
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CHOICES and CHANGES in OUR LIVES TODAY
BY
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EDITOR OF LILITH, THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE
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